

REDEMPTIVE DISCIPLE-MAKING,
A PATHWAY TO DEVELOPING REDEMPTIVE LEADERS

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To my loving wife Brenda, who brings out the best in me and
makes me want to be a better man.

And to my children whom I love, Caitlin, Daniel, Nathaniel, and Emily.

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GLOSSARY

Apprentice: One who places themselves under the guidance of another, usually an expert, for the purpose of learning a skill, art, trade, or calling.¹

Disciple: A follower, student or apprentice; one who is in the process of becoming like Jesus. The Greek word for disciple, μαθητής (*mathetes*), means “learner, pupil, student or trainee.”²

Disciple-making or Discipleship: An intentional process of leading a person or group of people through spiritual growth, ministry experiences and teaching in order that they will be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did.

Discipler: One who invests in the spiritual formation of an individual or group of people with the goals of disciple-making.

Great Commandments: In Matthew 22:37-39, Jesus stated that the two greatest commandments that were the foundation of all other commandments were to love God and to love other people: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

Great Commission: Some of the final words that Jesus left with his disciples after his resurrection and before his ascension into heaven, “All authority in heaven and on

1. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apprentice> (accessed October 25, 2019), s.v. apprentice.

2. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1067.

earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:18b-20).

Leader: “The person who leads or commands a group, organization, or country.”³ In the context of Christian ministry, a leader is one who is directing others toward a God-honoring and biblical goal, and who demonstrates godly characteristics of servanthood and humility.⁴

Leadership: “The action of leading a group of people or an organization.”⁵ The leadership of a Christian leader should move people toward Christ-likeness and the pursuit of biblical purposes of the church, especially the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

Mentor: “An experienced and trusted person who gives another person advice and help, especially related to work or school, over a period of time.”⁶ Similar to a discipler except that the focus is usually to help a person develop a specific skill or character quality.

3. Lexico Online Dictionary, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/leaders> (accessed August 30, 2019), s.v. leaders.

4. John Piper, “What is Leadership?” <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-leadership> (accessed August 30, 2019).

5. Lexico Online Dictionary, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/leadership> (accessed August 30, 2019), s.v. leadership.

6. Cambridge Online Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/mentor> (accessed August 30, 2019), s.v. mentor.

Multiplying / multiplication: A term used to describe reproducing disciple-making where people are discipled who in turn disciple others who will disciple yet others. Jesus modeled a multiplying ministry with his twelve disciples, who then discipled others. The Apostle Paul admonished Timothy to entrust his teaching “to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2).

Post-Christian: A culture in which Christianity used to be a dominant influence, but is no longer. A post-Christian worldview exists in a “society rooted in the history, culture, and practices of Christianity but in which the religious beliefs of Christianity have been either rejected or, worse, forgotten.”⁷

Redemption: “The liberation of any possession, object, or person, usually by payment of a ransom... to loose and so to free.”⁸ Jesus’ mission of salvation involved his personal sacrifice in order to set us free from the bondage of sin.

Redemptive: The characteristic of something that involves the redemption of things or people. A redemptive leader is one who leads in such a way that others are restored and developed so that they become all that God intended them to be.

Spiritual Direction: The ministry of a spiritual director coming alongside another individual to offer guidance, encouragement, and companionship in their spiritual

7. John O’Sullivan, “Our Post-Christian Society,” in *National Review Online*, December 14, 2013, <https://www.nationalreview.com/2013/12/our-post-christian-society-john-osullivan/> (accessed August 30, 2019).

8. Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, eds., *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 1827.

journey.⁹ “The goal of spiritual direction is spiritual formation—the ever increasing capacity to live a spiritual life from the heart.”¹⁰

Spiritual Maturity: A key goal in disciple-making, where one becomes metaphorically a spiritual adult, wise in thinking, godly in behavior, and intimate in relationship with God. Ephesians 4:13 describes this as the outcome of the effective work of those who lead the church: “until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

Transformation: “An inward renewal and reshaping of the mind through which a Christian’s inner person is changed into the likeness of Christ.”¹¹ The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that believers are being changed to become like Christ “from one degree of glory to another.” In Romans 12:2, he exhorts his readers, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...”

9. Gordon T. Smith, *Spiritual Direction, A Guide to Giving and Receiving Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014), 9.

10. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Spiritual Direction, Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2006), xv.

11. Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary, Tyndale Reference Library* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 1271.

ABSTRACT

Redemptive Disciple-making is a critical part of the process of developing redemptive leaders. Redemptive Disciple-making is characterized by three primary outcomes: *being with Jesus*, *becoming like Jesus*, and *doing the things that Jesus did*. In order for these three outcomes to be realized through any discipleship program, there are seven essential factors that must all be present: Engaging in spiritual disciplines, embracing biblical truth that shapes worldview, experiencing transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit, forming loving relationships with others that journey together in spiritual formation, experiencing ministry activities that move the discipleship experience from the head to the heart, missional living that draws others to Christ, and multiplication of disciples. Redemptive Disciple-making is relationship-focused over curriculum-focused and seeks to develop spiritually and emotionally healthy mature followers of Jesus Christ who will grow into humble and servant-hearted redemptive leaders who will impact those around them with the love and hope of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Thesis Topic and Research Questions

This thesis-project will seek to understand the role of redemptive disciple-making as a critical ingredient in the process of equipping redemptive leaders. The purpose of the project is to develop a biblical and effective framework for discipleship that goes beyond developing mature Christians to developing redemptive leaders who are engaged in building God's kingdom through multiplying disciple-making. I intend to show how a biblical disciple-making model correlates to the redemptive leadership model, and therefore can become an effective step in the leadership development process. While the redemptive leadership model includes five stages (competency, principles, character, transformation, and redemptive), redemptive disciple-making specifically relates to two of those stages, the development of character and transformation of a redemptive leader.

This project will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the biblical pattern for disciple-making and in what ways is it redemptive?
2. What are the essential factors of a disciple-making ministry that would qualify it as being redemptive?
3. How does redemptive disciple-making correlate to redemptive leadership?
4. What measurable changes resulted from taking a group of people through a redemptive discipleship experience?

These questions will explore the following thesis statement: *A biblical redemptive disciple-making process is an essential tool in the development of redemptive leaders.*

Background and Rationale

Some of Jesus' final words included what is referred to as the Great Commission, found in Matthew 28:18-20. At the heart of these verses is the command to "make disciples." Most if not all evangelical church leaders would agree that this is the primary purpose of the church. But there is less agreement on answers to questions such as, "How do we make disciples?" and, "Is discipleship primarily education and instruction, or is it far more?"

Early in my spiritual journey, I was taught that discipleship consisted of going through study books to learn truth, memorizing scripture, obeying God, being accountable to others in a small group, practicing spiritual disciplines, and learning to do ministry things like witnessing and leading a group. While this college ministry experience was vital to my development of a strong faith and call to ministry, I saw other people who went through the process at an intellectual level but did not engage in a way that brought about a transformed life. Some even seemed to hit a "wall" at some point and walk away from their faith.

Many church discipleship programs that I have observed consist primarily of teaching and small groups. The teaching side of things includes weekend services, classes and workshops that focus on increasing knowledge. The small group ministries tend to be haphazard in their selection of curriculum or focus primarily on building relationships. In those kinds of ministries, there is an obvious lack of intentionality in developing people through a process of transformation and growth that leads them toward a kingdom-

building lifestyle. The result has been that many people in the church have much biblical knowledge, but they may not possess the character qualities listed as the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23, and they may not engage in an outward focus of reaching the lost and impacting the culture around them. Carey Nieuwhof refers to them as being “flabby Christians.”

It’s wonderful that people understand what they believe, but knowledge in and of itself is not a hallmark of Christian maturity. As Paul says, knowledge puffs up. Love, by contrast, builds up. And some of the most biblically literate people in Jesus’ day got by-passed as disciples. The goal is not to know, but to *do* something with what you know.¹

Greg Ogden writes that many believers mistakenly think that we can be a Christian without being a disciple.² In their thinking, a Christian is one who believes in Jesus, but a disciple is one who is more committed to following, obeying, and growing in Jesus. Scripture makes no such distinction, however! The church’s role is to call every believer in Jesus Christ to a life of discipleship and disciple-making.

Jesus’ practice of disciple-making was highly relational and focused on transformation more than information, with the end result of mobilizing a group of men and women whose lives were dedicated to furthering God’s kingdom through reaching the lost and leading the found to grow to become disciple-makers themselves (Mark 3:13-15; John 13:34-35; John 15:12-17; Matt 28:18-20). I am proposing that redemptive disciple-making is a transformative experience whereby people deepen in their biblical thinking to become principle-based, develop godly character, and grow into an intimate

1. Carey Nieuwhof, “How the Church Today is Getting Discipleship Wrong,” <https://careynieuwhof.com/how-the-church-today-is-getting-discipleship-wrong/> (accessed April 14, 2019).

2. Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*, exp. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 7.

and trusting relationship with God through Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. As a result, they live grace-filled lives that seek to draw others into redemptive relationships with God.

In the Christian organization, discipleship and leadership development are like the two sides of the same coin.³ Discipleship focuses on the development of a healthy spiritual life in a person, while leadership focuses on growing in the skills necessary to effectively lead people and organizations to a desired future. If the product of a discipleship process is people who are in relationship with Jesus, mature in their faith and worldview, then those outcomes help prepare a person for redemptive leadership. A disciple-making church needs to be led by redemptive leaders who have become mature followers of Christ through a redemptive disciple-making process.

The Navigators organization has been a pioneer in discipleship since 1933. In 2014, they commissioned the Barna Group to undertake an extensive study of disciple-making in the United States. The result was published in 2015 as “The State of Discipleship.”⁴ The churches that responded indicated only 20% of their congregants were involved in discipleship activities such as “Sunday School, spiritual mentoring, group Bible study or Christian book study.”⁵ In my experience, while their list of discipleship activities can be disciple-making, they can also be merely the addition to more knowledge in the life of the participant, not resulting in life change or engagement in Jesus’ mission to reach the lost and disciple believers. In contrast, those churches that

3. Todd Adkins, *Developing Your Leadership Pipeline*, (Nashville, TN: Lifeway, 2016), E-book.

4. Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, (Ventura, CA: Barna, 2015).

5. Barna Group, *The State of Discipleship*, 10.

have a discipleship leader focused on helping people to grow in their faith, around 50% of their congregants “are in some sort of discipleship group or relationship.”⁶

The Barna study summarizes their findings with the following:

Churches are in need of new models for discipleship. Current programs capture only a minority of Christians, and most believers do not prioritize an investment in their spiritual growth. At the same time, church leaders desire a clear plan and lack systems to evaluate spiritual health. Millennials, as we will see – though time-starved and distracted – crave relationships, especially one-on-one.⁷

David Kinnaman, president and owner of Barna Group, states that there are three reasons that we must be future-focused on how we will help people in the spiritual formation process.⁸ The first reason is that with the growth of a digital age, the internet and social media platforms have become a huge part of people’s lives. This can be a distraction and have a negative effect on their spiritual lives, but these can also become platforms used to engage people in the discipleship process. Secondly, people are increasingly busy, not only in the distraction of technology, but also with an increasing number of opportunities in how to spend their time. In our post-Christian world, we can no longer assume that if we offer an engaging church service or well-developed Bible study that people are interested and will attend. The third reason that we must address disciple-making with a future focus is that people are increasingly focused on themselves as the center of everything, creating a narcissistic culture. In contrast, Jesus calls any who would be his disciple to “deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me”

6. Barna Group, The State of Discipleship, 10.

7. Barna Group, The State of Discipleship, 12.

8. Barna Group, The State of Discipleship, 13-15.

(Luke 9:23).⁹ Disciple-making in the future must include an element of calling people away from their narcissism to surrender and submission to Jesus as their master.

In August and September of 2018, LifeWay research interviewed 1,000 Protestant pastors in the United States, and at first glance the results are encouraging.¹⁰ Sixty-five percent indicated that they are satisfied with the state of discipleship and spiritual formation in their church, and 83% say they have an intentional plan for discipleship. A similar survey in 2011 showed that only 47% were satisfied with their disciple-making efforts. However, looking at the activities that these pastors indicate are present to make disciples, they largely follow traditional education-based groups and classes.

Taken together, these two studies show that while many churches offer what they think will produce disciples, the majority of Christians are not engaged in disciple-making activities. Additionally, Bible studies, classes and other traditional discipleship activities are only a part of the solution. In order for redemptive disciple-making to occur, other essential elements must be present in order to produce life change and a kingdom-building lifestyle. In this project I am proposing that there are three primary outcomes of the redemptive disciple-making process: *being with Jesus*, *becoming like Jesus*, and *doing what Jesus did*.¹¹ For each of these outcomes, there are certain activities, beliefs, or practices that should be embraced.

9. *English Standard Version* (ESV). All scripture taken from ESV unless otherwise noted.

10. Carol Pipes, “New Research: Most Pastors Satisfied With Discipleship Efforts, But Recognize Room for Growth,” (April 11, 2019), <https://lifewayresearch.com/2019/04/11/new-research-most-pastors-satisfied-with-discipleship-efforts-room-for-growth/> (accessed April 14, 2019).

11. “Be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did” came from a sermon by John Mark Comer at Bridgetown Community Church, Portland, Oregon, September 23, 2018.

Being With Jesus

Jesus selected twelve from among the disciples “that they might be with him” (Mark 3:14). In Matthew 22, we read that Jesus told a lawyer that the most important command, and summary of the whole Old Testament, was to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.”¹² The disciples had the distinct opportunity to spend much time physically in the presence of Jesus. As they followed him throughout Israel, listening to his teaching, seeing his compassionate ministry to others, they fell in love with him. After the resurrection, as he was restoring Peter, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved him. Each time Peter responds in the affirmative, to which Jesus commands him to feed his sheep and lambs. While this interchange indicates a reinstatement of Peter’s mission to make disciples, it also is probably connected to the three-fold denial of Jesus by Peter.¹³ In this project, we will explore practices and spiritual disciplines that help people cultivate a heart of love for Jesus while spending time with Jesus.

Becoming Like Jesus

An important part of discipleship is growing in the understanding and application of Scripture. In Luke 2, we read of Jesus at the age of twelve going to Jerusalem and engaging the religious teachers in questions and listening to their answers. Then in verse 52 Luke writes, “And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.” In Luke 4 we read of Jesus’ temptation by Satan in the wilderness. In response to

12. Matthew 22:37b-38.

13. George R. Beasley-Murray, “John,” Vol. 36 in *Word Biblical Commentary*, (Dallas: Word, 2002), 404.

each temptation, Jesus quoted Scripture that he had memorized to defeat the evil one's attacks. At the end of his ministry, after his resurrection, Jesus shared Scripture with the men on the road to Emmaus, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself" (Luke 24:27). Jesus was raised in the knowledge of the Scriptures and it filled his life and ministry from childhood until his ascension into heaven.

In addition to building a foundation of biblical knowledge, a second essential factor in becoming like Jesus involves the character transformation that occurs when the Holy Spirit invades a person's inner life so that their motives, desires, and attitudes reflect the life of Jesus. In Galatians 5, the Apostle Paul lists the fruit of the Spirit, which could be described as the virtues that result in a person's life because of the transformative work of the Spirit, not because of their laboring to change.¹⁴ Someone who has matured in their faith has the consistency of character that reflects the love, truthfulness, and integrity of our Savior.

The third essential factor in becoming like Jesus is growing in loving relationships with others. The second part of the response that Jesus had to the lawyer was, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matt 22:39b). Jesus demonstrated love in his relationships with those in need, with his disciples, and ultimately for all humanity when he sacrificed himself on the cross. A mature follower of Jesus will demonstrate love in all their relationships, whether with family, friends, the community of faith, or with people who are in need. This Spirit-infused love for others will also drive us to show love to

14. Richard N. Longenecker, *Galatians*, Vol. 41 in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 1998), 259.

those who are not followers of Jesus, with the hope that they too will come to know and love the Jesus that we follow. In quoting this second command of neighbor-love along with the first command of loving God supremely, Jesus elevated love for others to the same level of importance as loving God himself.¹⁵ One cannot be a mature follower of Jesus if they do not love other people well!

Doing What Jesus Did

Categorizing different aspects of a follower's relationship with Jesus can be problematic in that it separates concepts that are actually overlapping. In this instance, the idea of serving Jesus cannot be separated from the idea of loving Jesus. Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments (John 14:15)." An effective disciple-making ministry will include doing what Jesus did in at least three primary ways. First, the discipleship process will include ministry experiences, not just instructing in knowledge. As the disciples traveled with Jesus, they observed and then participated in the ministry that he did. Secondly, the discipleship process will be missional, engaging the community and world around us in relationship, serving where there is need, and inviting people to come meet Jesus.

Thirdly, an effective discipleship ministry will include multiplication.¹⁶ When Jesus gave the Great Commission to the disciples, he told them to "teach them to observe all that I have commanded you..." (Matt 28:20a). Implicit in the command to make disciples and teaching to observe is the idea that they will teach others to make disciples

15. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996), 81.

16. Greg Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, Rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 136.

as well. In writing to Timothy, the Apostle Paul told him, “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:2). At the end of his life, Paul commissions Timothy to implement a ministry of multiplication so that disciples are continually developed.¹⁷ The lack of emphasis on multiplication is one of the critical mistakes that many churches and discipleship programs overlook to their detriment.¹⁸ Ogden writes, “A major reason that we have not been producing fully devoted followers of Christ is that people have not been intentionally discipled in a manner that is reproducible.”¹⁹ Craig Etheridge writes, “In most cases, church leaders are running long-standing programs with little thought to whether these programs are actually contributing to the formation of passionate, reproducing disciples.”²⁰

Conclusion

Summarizing the ways listed above for people to be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did, there are at least seven critical factors to incorporate into a redemptive discipleship process:

1. Engaging in spiritual disciplines.
2. Embracing biblical truth.

17.. A. Duane Litfin, *2 Timothy*, Vol. 2 in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 752.

18. Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, New Spire Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2010), 107-108.

19. Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 152.

20. Craig Etheridge, “How Do You Make Disciples?” *Disciplefirst*. May 21, 2019, <https://disciplefirst.com/how-do-you-make-disciples-2019/> (accessed June 3, 2019).

3. Experiencing character transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit.
4. Developing loving relationships.
5. Experiences that engage participant in ministry.
6. Missional living that draws others to Christ.
7. Multiplication of disciples.

These seven essential factors were developed through a study of the gospels to determine Jesus' method of discipleship, and in reviewing other models of discipleship presented in current literature. While these seven factors do not have a direct correlation to another model of discipleship, they are similar to the eight primary domains that point to spiritual health as presented by Geiger, Kelley, and Nation in *Transformational Discipleship*.²¹

In order to determine the effectiveness of discipleship programs, this project will evaluate four different disciple-making experiences based on these seven essential factors. If any of these factors are lacking in the disciple-making program, they will create a deficiency in the outcomes of discipleship.

In Chapter 2, I will examine the biblical material on disciple-making found in the New Testament, specifically in the Gospels, Acts, and in the writings of Paul. Jesus is deliberate in his disciple-making, beginning with the call of men to "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17), through to the giving of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20. Likewise, the Apostle Paul is a legendary disciple-maker. Throughout Acts and his letters, we observe Paul including others in his

²¹ Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2012), 58.

missionary journeys and giving them specific assignments to carry out later when they are on their travels and missionary journeys. In his final letter, written to his protege, Paul commissions Timothy with, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:1-2). In essence, Paul is personalizing the call to disciple-making with the multiplication into the lives of others who will in turn reproduce into yet others’ lives.

Chapter 3 will review relevant literature on the topic of disciple-making, surveying and capturing principles from many resources. Beginning with the classic work from Robert Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, I will examine the biblical foundations of discipleship from the perspective of other authors. Greg Ogden’s excellent work, *Transforming Discipleship*, will be considered alongside Jim Putnam and Bobby Harrington’s relationship-first discipleship model captured in *Discipleshift*. Other authors that I will review include James Bryan Smith, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Walter Henrichsen, and others.

Some authors approach disciple-making from a more contemplative viewpoint, and I will be reviewing their works as well. These include Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* and *Emotionally Healthy Leaders*; Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, *Revolution of Character*; and Ruth Hailey Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*, among others.

Chapter 4 will describe the project itself. I will compare four different discipleship models that have been implemented at Venture Christian Church, Los Gatos, California, during 2017-2019. Using the seven essential factors of redemptive disciple-

making, I will measure the results of each discipleship model using written assessments completed by the subjects involved in the disciple-making experiment.

The principles of disciple-making are equally applicable to men or women. Jesus' tribe of disciples included women, such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna (Luke 8:1-3). Not only are they listed as close followers of Jesus and could be considered his disciples, they are also attributed to be the ones who supported his missionary journeys (Luke 8:3).

Given the limited time-scope of this project, I will only be able to observe the life-change that occurs over months, when in reality, it takes years for someone to go from being a spiritual infant to a mature follower of Jesus. In a similar vein, because of the need to limit the scope of this project, I will focus only on disciple-making processes implemented at a single church in Northern California. There are many thriving churches, missionary efforts, and disciple-making movements throughout the world, but those are topics that need to be researched and understood in different projects.

In Chapter 5, I will evaluate the impact and transformation in the lives of those who participated in the discipleship groups. My hope is to discover specific practices and methodologies that increase the transformation and character development in their lives, and that lead to greater engagement in ministry to the effective impact in the community around us and increasing multiplication of disciple-making. As a result, I expect to see emerging redemptive leaders.

My desire is also that this project will lead to the development of greater effectiveness in disciple-making in my local ministry setting, as well as providing concepts and resources for the development of better disciple-making ministries in other

churches. As any thesis-project must be limited in scope, I expect that this project will likewise uncover other areas of needed research in order to improve our disciple-making ministries in the future. I am encouraged that there seems to be a resurgence of focus on disciple-making in the United States and am glad to be able to participate in the development and growth of this movement.

Now let us turn our attention to the biblical foundations of disciple-making. In Chapter 2, I will explore the theology of discipleship found in the New Testament.

CHAPTER 2

BIBLICAL / THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

While most, if not all, evangelical churches believe that the Great Commission is the mission statement for the church, not many churches are engaging in disciple-making that shows the kinds of results that Jesus' ministry did 2,000 years ago. If we are to become biblical churches that help people *be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do the things that Jesus did*, we must return to the biblical mandate to “make disciples of all nations” (Matt 28:19a). In this chapter, we will look at the biblical call to disciple-making, including the New Testament examples of Jesus' and the Apostle Paul's ministries. We will also examine passages in the New Testament that describe the core characteristics of a disciple. To begin, we will look at the Redemptive Leadership model and how Jesus was the ultimate redemptive leader.

Redemptive Leadership

The redemptive leadership model was developed by Dr. Rodney Cooper and Dr. Harv Powers. Redemptive leadership recognizes that there is a process that God takes each person through for them to develop into mature, healthy, and loving leaders. This process includes the difficult and negative experiences as well as the positive things that happen in our lives. According to Dr. Powers, “Leadership is influencing others to release their redemptive potential in fulfilling their purpose under God.”¹ Along the journey, we will encounter many pivotal times that produce transformation in our lives. Redemptive

1. Rodney Cooper, *Redemptive Leadership*, Doctor of Ministry Class Lecture (Charlotte, NC: Gordon-Conwell Seminary, May 2015).

leadership can only happen in the context of loving community. The five aspects of the redemptive model which must all be present in order for it to be redemptive include competency, principles, character, transformation, and redemptive. Each will be explained in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Jesus was the ultimate redemptive leader. In one of his purpose statements as to why he came to earth, he stated that “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). The Apostle Paul stated that Jesus “gave himself as a ransom for all” (1 Tim 2:6a). The Greek words for ransom in both of these verses come from the same root λυτρόω, meaning “to release on receipt of a ransom.”² Jesus willingly sacrificed himself on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins to release us from the bondage of sin and death and to bring us into his family as adopted children, and thus became our redeemer (Rom 3:24, Gal 4:5, Eph 1:7, Titus 2:14). As he invested his ministry into the disciples, we can see the five factors of the redemptive leadership model at work in their development.

The first level of redemptive leadership, competency, refers to the foundational set of skills, experience, and knowledge required in order to accomplish the responsibilities expected of an individual. A leader with high competency instills confidence in his or her followers. While competence is necessary for a person to be an effective and contributing part of a team, in and of itself is insufficient for a healthy organization.

2. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 1067.

As Jesus trained his disciples, they were learning not only truth but skills to do ministry (competency). When he sent the twelve out in Luke 9, and later the 72 others out in Luke 10, he gave them instructions in how to do ministry, based on what they had been observing in his ministry up to that point. “And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal” (Luke 9:1-2). Their ministry was to include preaching, healing, and deliverance, things which they had observed in Jesus ministry. Likewise, in the following chapter in Luke when Jesus sent out 72 others, he told them to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom of God. When they returned from their trip, they exclaimed, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name” (Luke 10:17)! From these examples we see that Jesus was investing in the first level of redemptive leadership in his disciples – competency.

The second level of redemptive leadership is principle, “underlying truths which transcend situations.”³ Jesus’ teaching and the way he interacted with others imparted principles to his disciples. While the religious leaders of Jesus’ day were great at giving lip service to the Old Testament laws, Jesus rebuked them for hypocrisy, “For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their fingers (Matt 23:3b-4). Throughout the remainder of Matthew 23 he pronounces seven woes on the scribes and Pharisees, basically stating that they observed the laws (principles) that they liked but neglected the more important principles such as “justice and mercy and faithfulness” (v23b). In contrast, Jesus’ teaching was countercultural, putting people

3. Cooper, *Redemptive Leadership* Class Lecture, May 2015.

before laws, and instructing his disciples to live by the principles of love, humility, and servanthood (John 13).

The third level of redemptive leadership is character. Dr. Rodney Cooper defines character as “the deep structures of who we are that have been shaped by our life experiences, which involves both our pluses and minuses, our strengths and vulnerabilities.”⁴ In Romans 5:3-4, the Apostle Paul declares that we can rejoice in suffering because it “produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.” This Greek word for character, δοκιμή, is translated as “proven worth” in Philippians 2:2, referring to Timothy’s character, and as “test you” in determining the character of the church at Corinth in 2 Corinthians 2:9. The word δοκιμή and its affiliated words can mean to test or examine something for the purpose of determining if it is genuine and trustworthy.⁵ As the disciples followed Jesus, learning from his teaching, rebukes (Mark 8:33; Luke 8:25, 9:46-48), and his compassionate example,⁶ their thinking and beliefs changed, and slowly their character was forged.

The fourth level of redemptive leadership that Jesus exemplified is transformation. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that we “are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another,” referring to becoming like Jesus. In reference to this transformation, Colin Kruse writes, “The continuous and progressive transformation by which believers are changed *from one degree of glory to another* is the

4. Cooper, *Redemptive Leadership* Class Lecture, May 2015.

5. Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1996), 331.

6. For instance, Jesus’ kindness toward children (Matt 19:14) and his response to the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11).

moral transformation which is taking place in their lives so that they approximate more and more to the likeness of God expressed so perfectly in the life of Jesus Christ.”⁷ The Greek word for transformation is μεταμορφόομαι meaning “to change the essential form or nature of something.”⁸ The Apostle Paul also uses this same word in Romans 12:2 when he exhorts his readers to “be transformed by the renewal of your mind.”

As these two passages explain, spending time in the presence of Jesus and renewing your mind through the teachings of Jesus will result in a transformation to something new. The Apostle Paul states plainly in 2 Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.” Transformation is a supernatural process superintended by the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 3:18b) that changes us from our old nature to our new nature in Christ-likeness. As evidence of the transformative work in the disciples’ lives both from being with Jesus and the infilling of the Holy Spirit, consider Acts 4:8-13,

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, “Rulers of the people and elders, if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead—by him this man is standing before you well. This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

7. Colin G. Kruse, “2 Corinthians: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 8 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 101–102.

8. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 154.

Peter and John were fisherman before they met Jesus. They did not have an education that prepared them to speak to large crowds or before powerful religious leaders. But because of the transformational work resulting from being with Jesus and being filled with the Holy Spirit, they did miraculous works and spoke boldly.

The final level of redemptive leadership is becoming redemptive. When one has been transformed by Jesus Christ, with a foundation of competency, principles, and character, they want to invest in the lives of others that they may become transformed into the image of Christ as well. When Jesus announced his ministry in his hometown, he went to the synagogue and read from Isaiah 61, telling the listeners that he was the fulfillment of this promise:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:18-19).

A redemptive leader is one who sets others free from bondage, delivering them out of oppression and brokenness. Jesus' ministry and subsequently his disciples' ministry was one of redemption. There is no better example to follow of how to disciple redemptive leaders than to examine Jesus' ministry.

Discipleship

The primary biblical material on disciple-making is found in the New Testament, specifically in the Gospels, Acts, and in the writings of Paul. Jesus' discipleship was highly relational, spending the majority of his time with his twelve chosen apostles, but also ministering to the crowds. Jesus poured into his followers through teaching, object lessons, many questions, and actively ministering to those in need.

Disciple Defined

What is a disciple? “In its most basic definition, a disciple was a person who follows a master teacher to become like him and to carry on his work.”⁹ Warren Wiersbe describes a disciple well: “A ‘disciple’ is a learner, one who attaches himself or herself to a teacher in order to learn a trade or a subject. Perhaps our nearest modern equivalent is ‘apprentice,’ one who learns by watching and by doing. The word *disciple* was the most common name for the followers of Jesus Christ...”¹⁰ Another writer defines a disciple as “Someone who follows another person or another way of life and who submits himself to the discipline (teaching) of that leader or way.”¹¹

The Greek word for disciple (μαθητής) meant being a “learner, pupil, student, or trainee.”¹² In the Jewish tradition, μαθητής indicated a “total attachment to someone, not the classic Greek idea of a pupil.”¹³ The goal of the disciple was to become a master or rabbi themselves. In contrast, Jesus’ disciples are to look to him to be their rabbi and pursue a life of discipleship that results in making other disciples.¹⁴

During Jesus’ time on earth, other teachers had their disciples as well, including the Pharisees (Luke 5:33) and John the Baptist (Matt 9:14). Discipleship is rooted in the

9. Craig Etheridge, *Invest in a Few* (Discipleship.org, 2017), e-book.

10. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 232.

11. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 629.

12. Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1072.

13. Colin Brown, Ed. *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), G3412 μαθητής.

14. William D. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), s.v. disciple.

Old Testament narrative,¹⁵ with prophets who would commission younger men to accompany them and train them how to serve God. Early forms of discipleship can be seen with Joshua, who served Moses and eventually became his successor in leading the nation of Israel (Ex 24:13, 33:11, Josh 1:1). Another example is found in the relationship between Elijah and his successor, Elisha (1 Kings 19:16, 19-21, 2 Kings 2:1-14).

The Call to Discipleship

Jesus is deliberate in his selection of disciples, beginning with the call to Simon and Andrew to “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). A few verses later, Jesus extends the call to James and John, another pair of brothers who were also fishermen. The call described in verse 17 includes an invitation to become his disciples, spending time with him, learning of him and being transformed into something they were not currently: fishers of men. Jesus’ invitation to these two pairs of brothers spoke of something they were familiar with, fishing, but applied it in an entirely new way: fishing for people instead of fishing for fish. Jesus’ invitation to Matthew is similar to the call to the fisherman but is very simple with the only recorded statement being “follow me” (Mark 2:14; Matt 9:9).

Jesus literally asked his disciples to “Come after me” (δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου), which differed from the rabbinic schools of Jesus’ day by focusing more on sharing life together in community than just being a student of the rabbi.¹⁶ Wuest writes that following Jesus meant “to join one as a disciple, to cleave steadfastly to one, conform wholly to his

15. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 630.

16. Robert A. Guelich, *Mark 1–8:26*, Vol. 34A in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 1998), 50–51.

example, in living and, if need be, in dying.”¹⁷ In the description of the calling of the four disciples in the previous paragraph, each situation included an immediate abandonment of their profession to take on a new profession of following Jesus and being trained to become fishers of men.

According to Mounce, it was typical for a disciple to seek out the rabbi that he wanted to learn from and voluntarily join that rabbi’s school. However, in Jesus’ case, he deliberately selected those that he wanted to be his disciples (Mark 1:17, 2:14; Luke 5:1-11).¹⁸ In addition, Jesus’ selection of the disciples did not follow the norm in Jewish culture of who would be an acceptable disciple, as seen in his choosing a tax collector and a zealot to be among his inner circle of twelve disciples. In Mark 2:14, we read of Jesus’ call to Levi (identified as Matthew in Matthew 9:9), a tax collector who would have been as repulsive as a leper to Jewish society.¹⁹ Scripture does not record the call to Simon the Zealot, and little is known about his life or ministry, yet in both Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13 he is listed as one of the disciples. Regarding the term “zealot,” Morris writes: “He may have belonged to the radical group of ‘Zealots’ who were notorious for their violent resistance to Rome, or the name may suggest that he was characterized by fiery zeal.”²⁰ If Simon had ties with a radical anti-Roman group, Jesus’ association with him

17. Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 29.

18. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, s.v. disciple.

19. R. Alan Cole, “Mark: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 2 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 124.

20. Leon Morris, “Luke: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 3 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 145.

would have demonstrated support for political rebellion, which would have been a threat to the peace of the Jewish people in Palestine.

Prior to Jesus' appointment of the twelve disciples, he spent a full night in prayer. Although the content of his prayer is not recorded, this extraordinary engagement in prayer was immediately followed by the selection of twelve men who would become his apostles:

And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor (Luke 6:13-16).

Notice that the term "disciples" applies here to a larger group of people who were following Jesus, not just to the twelve, as indicated by "chose from them twelve." Robert Coleman writes that the selection of the twelve out of a larger base of disciples did not occur until the middle of his second year of ministry.²¹

In the appointment of the twelve found in Mark 3:14-15, his call included his purpose for them as apprentices: "that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach, and to have authority to cast out demons." Guelich describes the importance of this event with the following: "The appointment of the Twelve finds its significance in the calling together of twelve men to share indirectly and directly in Jesus' ministry."²² For the apostles in Jesus' day, and for us today, responding to the call of Jesus includes *being with him* in intimate and growing relationship, *becoming like him* as

21. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 24.

22. Guelich, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 165.

he transforms our lives through his teaching and example, and *doing the things that he did* in both a declaration ministry and a serving ministry.

Women and Discipleship

A number of women figure prominently in the life and ministry of Jesus. Luke records a list of women that were on a ministry trip along with Jesus and the Twelve, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, “and many others” (Luke 8:2-3). Mark described these women as well as Mary the mother of James and Joses, and also Solome as ones who “followed him and ministered to him” (Mark 15:41-42). The word for followed is the Greek “ἀκολουθέω” which is the identical word used by Jesus in Matthew 9:9 to call Matthew to be his disciple. The crucifixion scene recorded in Mark 15 also states that “there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem,” implying that they, too, had traveled from Galilee with Jesus, the Twelve, and the other named women who were his followers, thus his disciples.

Alan Cole comments on Mark 15:40-41, explaining that these women were more like the Apostles in their commitment and sacrifice than others who were disciples of Jesus in the larger crowd,

Here Mark specifically mentions the group of women disciples, some of them wealthy, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, and had apparently supported the apostolic group from their worldly wealth (41). They were watching the cross *from afar* (40), as both safety and Jewish convention demanded. They seem to have corresponded roughly to the ‘inner circle’ of the twelve, as distinct from the larger number of ‘followers’ (men or women) in the metaphorical sense, who remained living at home.²³

23. Cole, *Mark: An Introduction and Commentary*, 330.

In addition to being at the cross with Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Solome were the first to receive the news that Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:1-8). The angels who appeared to them commissioned these women to take the news of the resurrection to the disciples. Matthew 28:8-10 states that as the women left the tomb, Jesus appeared to them and greeted them, thus making these women the first ones to see him after the resurrection as well.

Grassmick comments on the involvement of the women disciples at the death and resurrection in this way: “Their devotion surpassed that of the 11 disciples who had deserted Him (14:50). Mark may have intended these words as an encouragement to faithful discipleship among women in the church at Rome.”²⁴ Warren Wiersbe affirms this sentiment by saying, “Faithful women were the last at the cross on Friday and the first at the tomb on Sunday. What a contrast to the disciples who had boasted that they would die for Him! The church of Jesus Christ owes much to the sacrifice and devotion of believing women.”²⁵

Women are also mentioned and included as disciples in the apostolic era following the ascension of Jesus to heaven. In Acts 9:36-42, Dorcas is described as being a disciple who died, and that Peter came and raised from the dead. Acts 18 introduces Priscilla and Aquila, a husband and wife team who were tentmakers (v3) that became traveling companions and co-laborers with Paul. He left them in Ephesus (v19) when he traveled on. While in Ephesus, Apollos showed up and began preaching, but his

24. John D. Grassmick, “Mark,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, Vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 191.

25. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 166.

knowledge was limited, so Priscilla and Aquila took him aside and taught him “the way of God more accurately” (v26). According to Romans 16:4-5 and 1 Corinthians 16:19, they were house church leaders as well. Of the six times Priscilla (or Prisca) and Aquila are mentioned by name in the New Testament, Aquila (the husband) is only mentioned first twice, but Priscilla is mentioned first four times. Marshall comments on the order of the listing of their names as significant: “Prisca is more frequently named before her husband, which suggests that she was the more important figure from a Christian point of view.”²⁶ In agreement with Marshall’s view, the *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible* records, “Priscilla’s personal character or her role in the church may account for her name coming before her husband’s in four out of six references.”²⁷ An alternative view from Toussaint is that it “*may* be due to her noble family background.”²⁸

In his personal greetings and conclusion of the book of Romans found in chapter 16, Paul sends greetings to at least twenty-six people by name, as well as two additional who are unnamed. Amongst this group of friends and ministry partners, Paul mentions a number of women, calling Phoebe a servant or deaconess, Prisca a fellow worker who risked her neck for his life, Mary who “worked hard for you” (v6), Junia who was a kinsman and fellow prisoner, “workers in the Lord, Tryphaena and Tryphosa” (v12), and others.

26. I. Howard Marshall, “Acts: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 5 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), 309.

27. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1765.

28. Stanley D. Toussaint, “Acts,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, Vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 405.

The construction of Romans 16:7 is interesting, describing Andronicus and Junia as “well known to the apostles” (ESV) or “outstanding among the apostles” (NIV). Paul also said that they were “in Christ” before he was and they are fellow prisoners, their arrest probably resulting from their activities in the ministry. Although controversial among theologians, Andronicus and Junia may well have been considered apostles. James Dunn comments, “The full phrase almost certainly means ‘prominent among the apostles,’ rather than ‘outstanding in the eyes of the apostles.’”²⁹ In agreement with that view, Bruce writes,

This couple (perhaps husband and wife) were Jewish by birth (Paul calls them his “kinsfolk”); they had shared one of Paul’s frequent imprisonments (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23), possibly in Ephesus. Moreover, they were “of note among the apostles,” which probably means that they were not merely well known to the apostles but were apostles themselves (in the wider, Pauline, sense of the word), and eminent ones at that.”³⁰

In a dissenting view, Wiersbe writes, “The word ‘apostle’ here does not imply that they held the same office as Paul, but rather that they were ‘messengers’ of the Lord. The word ‘apostle’ has both a narrow and a broad meaning.”³¹ But even in this dissenting view, Wiersbe does not take the position that the apostles knew about them, but they were in a special place of ministry leadership within the early church.

In Titus 2, Paul instructs Titus in the responsibility of older women to disciple the younger women: “They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women...” (v3b-4a). He goes on to describe teaching them character qualities befitting a woman of

29. James D. G. Dunn, “Romans 9–16,” Vol. 38B in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1988), 894.

30. F. F. Bruce, “Romans: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 6 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 272.

31. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 566.

God in order to bring honor to the word of God. While the general commands of discipleship found in the New Testament are applicable to both men and women, this passage addresses men and women separately. In the same passage, Paul gives Titus instruction for older men and younger men.

Women were included in both the ministries of Jesus and of Paul, and they are variously described as disciples, followers, servants, fellow workers, and apostles. Both Jesus and Paul honored women in a way that Jewish culture did not, including them in their inner circle of followers and giving them responsibilities of leadership and discipleship.

Counting the Cost of Discipleship

The gospel of Luke presents a challenging passage on discipleship. In Luke 14:25-35, Jesus addresses the crowd and gives three shocking disqualifications of discipleship. In the previous passage, Jesus was dining in the home of a leading Pharisee, and Jesus confronted their attitudes about honor and who should be included in kingdom feasts. Then in verse 26, Jesus tells them that in order to be a disciple, they must hate their family: “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.” Taken at face value, Jesus is telling people that they must hate and abandon family in order to follow him and be his disciple. Examining the broader context of Scripture, however, this would contradict other teaching. In John 13:35, Jesus said that others will know that we are his disciples by the love that we have for one another. So how can we hate our family but be known for love? Is it only referring to unbelieving family members?

The Apostle Paul supports the idea of demonstrating love to our family when he writes, “But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” That certainly does not sound like hating your family is okay! In Ephesians 5, Paul instructs husbands to “...love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (v25). Given these passages on how a Christian should relate to his or her family, Jesus could not have been using the word “hate” in the same way that we would use it today.

In the parallel passage found in Matthew 10:37, Jesus said, “Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” In this passage, rather than saying a disciple must hate his family, he warns that loving others more than loving him disqualifies from being a disciple. Commenting on the Luke 14:26 passage, John Martin writes,

Literally hating one’s family would have been a violation of the Law. Since Jesus on several occasions admonished others to fulfill the Law, He must not have meant here that one should literally hate his family. The stress here is on the priority of love (cf. Matt. 10:37). One’s loyalty to Jesus must come before his loyalty to his family or even to life itself. Indeed, those who did follow Jesus against their families’ desires were probably thought of as hating their families.³²

John Nolland answers the problem of using “hate” in this reference by stating that “the language of hate is typical Semitic hyperbole.”³³ Jesus makes an extreme statement about relating to our families and to ourselves in order to communicate the seriousness of committing to following him as a disciple.

32. John A. Martin, “Luke,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, Vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 243.

33. John Nolland, “Luke 9:21–18:34,” Vol. 35B in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 1993), 762.

After the statement of hating family, Jesus added “yes, even his own life...” (Luke 14:26b). In a way similar to hating one’s family, a literal, yet incorrect reading of hating your own life could lead to self-destruction or other harmful actions against oneself.³⁴ By loving Jesus more than we love our families and ourselves, we put ourselves in a position of total availability to following Jesus, even to the point of death.

Given these other passages, we can conclude that God is to be our first love and our life and priorities are to be aligned around serving and following him. Loving anyone or anything else more than we love God amounts to idolatry. Therefore, a disciple is one who loves God first and foremost, surrendering to his will and leading in life.

The second shocking statement on the cost of discipleship from Luke 14:27 states that in order to be his disciple, one must also, “bear his own cross and come after me.” I have heard people speak of bearing their cross as if it is a trial to endure, or an ongoing affliction in health or relationships that causes pain and sorrow. This perspective is a misrepresentation of Jesus’ meaning in this passage. “Crucifixion was universally recognized as the most horrible type of death.”³⁵ The cross was a brutal instrument of torture and execution, originally used by the Persians, then by the Greeks and later adopted by the Romans.³⁶ To a Jewish audience, bearing your cross meant that you had been on trial and condemned to death, and now you were carrying your cross to the place of crucifixion. “When Jesus enjoined His followers to carry their crosses and follow Him,

34. Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 766.

35. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 555.

36. Johannes Schneider, “Σταυρός, Σταυρώω, Ανασταυρώω,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 573.

He was referring to a public display before others that Jesus was right and that the disciples were following Him even to their deaths.”³⁷

Earlier in Luke it is recorded that Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Luke 9:23-24). By calling disciples to take up their cross and follow Jesus, he is challenging them to both die to themselves and their agenda in life,³⁸ and be willing to sacrifice themselves even to the point of death.³⁹

Jesus gave a third shocking statement about discipleship when he stated, “any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:33). This final challenge of renouncing possessions is similar to what Jesus said to the rich young ruler in Luke 18:22-23: “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” In a triad of strong disqualification, Jesus says, “You cannot be a disciple if you do not hate your family, hate your own life, and give up your ‘earthly goods.’⁴⁰”

To drive his point home about seriously considering the cost of being his disciple, Jesus told three short parables. The first is an analogy of planning out the construction of a tower to make sure the builder had sufficient financial resources to complete the project. The second parable is a king who assesses whether he has the manpower to win

37. Martin, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 243.

38. Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 189.

39. Martin, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, 243.

40. Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 764.

in a battle against a larger army. These two analogies are straightforward and reinforce the need for an individual to strongly consider the high cost in following Jesus.

The third parable is not as straightforward and easy to understand as the first two. In Luke 14:34-35, Jesus states, “Salt is good, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Taken the context of Jesus raising a high bar to discipleship, and the straightforward nature of the previous two parables, this analogy must also refer to the condition of one who commits to discipleship but is unable to fulfill the requirements. A disciple must possess the qualities of a disciple, or they will be useless. In this case the person could no more be considered a disciple than tasteless salt could be considered salt. In Nolland’s words, “his bid to achieve discipleship will have become an irretrievable disaster.”⁴¹

Jesus’ call to follow him is not a casual, feel-good invitation to a fun life. It is a serious, soul-searching invitation to a life of sacrifice and surrender. And it is a call to laying down your rights, desires and ambitions for the sake of serving the King and his agenda. There is a high cost to being a disciple of Jesus, and we should not shrink back from explaining that cost to those who would walk alongside us in a journey of discipleship as well.

41. Nolland, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 765.

Characteristics of a Disciple

Love

Throughout his ministry, Jesus unfolded key characteristics of a disciple. At the heart of these characteristics is the call to love. In John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” This statement occurs during the last supper on the day before Jesus is crucified, and immediately following the demonstration of Jesus’ love and servanthood by washing their feet. As the disciples have already spent three and a half years learning from Jesus, he uses these final hours together to communicate key thoughts that would prepare the disciples for the launch of the church and their role in taking the gospel to the world.

In Matthew 22, Jesus responds to the lawyer’s question of what the greatest commandment is by stating that loving God is the first, but the second is like it, to love your neighbor as yourself, or to the same degree that you love yourself. However, when Jesus gave his new commandment in John 13:34, he raised the bar to loving others to the same degree that he loved his disciples! Before declaring those words, he demonstrated his love by taking on the role of a servant and washing their feet, which were probably dusty and dirty from walking through dirt streets. Then only a day after giving the new command to love as he loved, Jesus gave the ultimate demonstration of his love by laying down his life and dying on the cross in their place.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another” (John 13:34). Three times in this verse, Jesus uses the Greek word ἀγαπάω in its verb form, meaning “to demonstrate or show one’s

love.”⁴² The noun form of the same word is found in the following verse when Jesus states that love is the distinguishing mark of being a disciple. The noun form is ἀγάπη which is “generally assumed to mean moral goodwill which proceeds from esteem, principle, or duty, rather than attraction or charm. *Agapē* means to love the undeserving, despite disappointment and rejection.”⁴³

Servanthood

After washing the disciples’ feet, Jesus ties the principles of servanthood to love by telling his disciples that they are to follow his example of serving others (John 13:12-17). Multiple times in the ministry of Jesus, his disciples competed for position and authority, which missed the heart of Jesus’ role on earth (Matt 20:20-21; Luke 9:46). In response to one of these occasions when James and John requested positions of glory, Jesus responded with an exhortation to servanthood, and gave himself as the example:

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

Humility

Jesus continually challenged the religious leaders of his day, and often their pride was the focus of his confrontation. In Luke 14, Jesus is dining at the home of a leading Pharisee on the Sabbath. In verse 7 it says that he noticed how they chose places of honor and told a parable to challenge their beliefs and practices. In his story, he tells them of

42. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 293.

43. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1357.

being invited to a wedding feast and says that they should choose the place of low honor at the far end of the table instead of the honored seating location closest to the host at the head of the table.⁴⁴ For it is better to be moved closer to the honored position than to be shamed and asked to move to a lower position. Then Jesus spells out his point directly, “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 14:11).

Perhaps the closest correlation to his illustration in our culture would be seating at a wedding reception. Instead of choosing to sit at the wedding party table at the focal point of the room, choose to sit at the table in the far corner away from the main table. In this way you are not trying to bring attention to yourself and exalting yourself to a position reserved for a few special guests. The application of Jesus’ parable was not so much about banquets and where you get to sit, but the larger principle of living a humble life that does not seek self-exaltation.

In Matthew 18, when the disciples asked who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus demonstrates his answer by bringing a child into their midst and stating, “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (v4). R.T. France explains this statement by saying, “True greatness is to be found in being little, true importance in being unimpressive.”⁴⁵ Humility is not a natural condition for people. We want to be recognized and applauded, appreciated for what we do and given accolades that honor us in the sight of others. Jesus’ teaching and his example was

44. Morris, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 249.

45. R. T. France, “Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 1 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 274.

counter-cultural and counter-intuitive in calling people to a life of humility and servanthood, rather than a life of pride, recognition, and being served.

These first three characteristics of a disciple are essential and intersecting qualities that work together to form the heart of a disciple. A loving disciple will be humble and serve others. A humble disciple will serve others in love. And a serving disciple is motivated by love for others that moves them to act in humility toward those in need.

The apostle Paul describes this well in Philippians 2: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (v3-4). He then goes on to explain how Jesus exemplified love, humility, and servanthood by setting aside the glory of heaven, becoming human, and dying on the cross. As a result, the Father exalted Jesus (v6-11). In the middle of this passage, Paul admonishes his readers to “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...” (v5). “Paul understood the mind as distinct from the spirit of man. It possesses the ability to understand and to reason (1 Cor 14:14–19); it is the seat of intelligence... A man’s actions flow from the inclinations of his mind. Whether a man is good or evil depends on the state of his mind.”⁴⁶ The mind of the disciple is to be conformed to the example of Jesus in love, humility, and servanthood.

46. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 1461.

Bearing Fruit

In John 15:8, Jesus says that bearing fruit (Greek = καρπὸς) proves that you are his disciple. While the first three characteristics deal with the inner life of a disciple and how they interact with the world around them, this characteristic of a disciple has more to do with the resulting impact in the lives of others, flowing from being in intimate relationship with Jesus. In verse 4, Jesus clarifies that we cannot bear fruit unless we abide in him, then in verse 5 he states that if we do abide in him and he abides in us we will bear much fruit. Two questions that arise from this passage are, “What does it mean to abide or remain in Jesus?” and, “What is fruit?”

“To ‘remain’ in Jesus has a deeper significance than simply to continue to believe in him, although it includes that; it connotes continuing to live in association or in union with him.”⁴⁷ In verse 7, Jesus says, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you...” signifying that in the same way that God’s words can dwell in us continually and be in our mind on an ongoing basis, so we have an ongoing dwelling relationship in Jesus. It also implies that his words dwelling in us facilitates our dwelling in Jesus. To further explain the concept of remaining in him, Jesus equates obedience to abiding in his love in verse 10. Connecting this back to John 13:34, Jesus said the new commandment was to “love one another as I have loved you.” Being obedient to his commandments primarily (but not exclusively) is to live a life of loving others, which is demonstrated in serving them and placing their needs ahead of your own. Derickson and Radmacher state that “abiding” was “a word Jesus chose to describe living by faith in communion with God,

47. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 272.

the Pauline sense of walking in the Spirit or being filled with the Spirit.”⁴⁸ To summarize abiding, it is to remain in intimate union and relationship with Jesus, taking in and remembering his words, and living in obedience to his commandments.

Obviously, fruit is a metaphor for something else, because only fruit-bearing plants and trees can produce physical fruit. The only hints of what fruit-bearing is in this passage may come from verse 7 where Jesus states that answered prayer comes from abiding in him, and then that abiding and obedience are linked. In verse 16, Jesus says that he chose and appointed his disciples that “you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain...” Colin Kruse explains fruit in this way: “The context, which stresses that ‘fruit’ is produced as the disciples maintain their fellowship with Jesus by keeping his word and when Jesus continues to fellowship with them by the Spirit, suggests that ‘fruit’ refers to the entire life and ministry of those who follow Jesus’ teaching and experience his presence in their lives through the Spirit.”⁴⁹

The Apostle Paul uses the term “fruit of the Spirit” in Galatians 5:22-23 to describe the character qualities produced in a person’s life as a result of being indwelt by the Holy Spirit. If one is abiding in Christ and the Holy Spirit indwells them, then they will experience the inner transformation that is demonstrated by “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.”

In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus uses the metaphor of separating sheep and goats for those welcomed into the inheritance of the kingdom or departing into eternal punishment

48. Gary Derickson and Earl Radmacher, *The Disciplemaker, What Matters Most to Jesus* (Salem, OR: Charis Press, 2001), 334.

49. Colin G. Kruse, “John: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 4 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 314.

based on their service of people who were in need. In his story the ways they cared for those in need included feeding the hungry, quenching thirst of the hungry, welcoming strangers, clothing the naked, and visiting the sick or those in prison. Jesus said that as long as we do these things for the lowliest of people, we are doing these acts of service to him. While not specifically using the word “fruit,” the concept of fruit bearing correlates well with meeting practical needs both physically and relationally for those who are unable to help themselves.

The authors of *The Disciplemaker* describe two primary views of what bearing fruit means: the first view is that fruit Jesus is referring to the character transformation known as the fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23. The second view is the missional impact in leading people to faith in Christ and helping them grow to maturity in their faith. Blending these two concepts together to form a definition of fruit-bearing, Derickson and Radmacher write, “The answer is not found in an ‘either-or’ solution, but both.”⁵⁰ Kruse summarizes the concept of bearing fruit well when he says, “The context, which stresses that ‘fruit’ is produced as the disciples maintain their fellowship with Jesus by keeping his word and when Jesus continues to fellowship with them by the Spirit, suggests that ‘fruit’ refers to the entire life and ministry of those who follow Jesus’ teaching and experience his presence in their lives through the Spirit.”⁵¹

Abiding in God’s Word

“So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, ‘If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free’” (John

50. Derickson and Radmacher, *The Disciplemaker*, 402-403.

51. Kruse, “John,” Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 314.

8:31-32). Again, Jesus gives a description of those who are truly disciples – those who continue living according to his word. This saying parallels John 15:7 where Jesus says that abiding in him and his words abiding in us leads to answered prayer. Beasley-Murray reflects on this connection by writing, “Μεῖνῃτε [abide] signifies a settled determination to *live* in the word of Christ and by it, and so entails a perpetual listening to it, reflection on it, holding fast to it, carrying out its bidding. In 15:7 it is represented as letting the word abide in us, which puts the same thing in another figure, and it leads to living (abiding) in Christ and Christ in us.”⁵²

A disciple of Jesus will engage in a regular intake of God’s word, allowing it to shape and reform their thinking patterns, resulting in a life lived in alignment with his word, thus abiding in his word. The Apostle Paul reflects this sentiment in 2 Timothy 3:16-17: “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” And again, in Colossians 3:16-17, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.” The result of Jesus’ words dwelling in us is an overflow into instructive and encouraging ministry to others, worshiping the Lord, a heart of gratitude, and a life flowing out into honor of God as everything is done in Jesus’ name.

52. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 133.

The final phrase found in verse 17 probably applies to the larger passage that begins in Colossians 2:6, with 3:17 serving as a concluding summary to all the preceding commands and admonitions.⁵³ However, the command of verse 16 to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” leads to the ability of “whatever you do” of verse 17.

Obedience

Jesus correlates love for him with obedience three times in John 14: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (v15). “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him” (v21). “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me” (v23-24). These verses contain promises of greater love, revelation, and the presence of the Father and Jesus with us, but these promises are conditional on our obedience to the words of Jesus. Then in the following chapter, Jesus declares that keeping his commandments will result in abiding in his love (John 15:10), another essential for being a disciple of Jesus.

A natural question flows from these verses on keeping the commands of Jesus: “What are the commands of Jesus?” As described earlier, the primary command of Jesus was to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). However, Jesus gave many instructions in his teaching, the sum of which could be considered his commands. In answer to this question, Beasley-Murray comments, “The interchange of ‘my commands’

53. N. T. Wright, “Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary,” Vol. 12 in *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 149.

with ‘my word’ and ‘my words’ in vv 21, 23, 24 suggests that they include the full range of the revelation from the Father, not simply ethical instructions... the lover of Jesus will live in the light of their guidance and their power.”⁵⁴

Empowered by the Holy Spirit

During the last supper discourse, Jesus introduces the promise of the Holy Spirit dwelling with his disciples, connecting it with the statement of demonstrating love to himself through obedience to his commands. “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:15-17). The term “helper” is the Greek word “παράκλητος” translated in other Bible versions as “advocate” (NIV), “comforter” (KJV), and “counselor” (HCSB). The general meaning of the word is “one who helps, by consoling, encouraging, or mediating on behalf of” another person.⁵⁵ In this instance, Jesus teaches that the Holy Spirit is “another” helper, one like himself, that would be with them persistently in the future. John affirms this in 1 John 2:1b where he states, “But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” The word “advocate” is the same word “helper” (παράκλητος) as used in John 14:16. Craig Blomberg writes that the Holy

54. Beasley-Murray, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 256.

55. Louw and Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 141.

Spirit “is Jesus’ personal representative and substitute, enabling the disciples to carry on ministry without Christ’s physical presence on earth.”⁵⁶

As recorded in John 14-16, Jesus progressively unfolds to the disciples who the Holy Spirit is and what he will do. In the initial description in 14:16-17, the Holy Spirit will be with them and will be their helper, one who comes alongside them to support and advocate for them. In 14:26, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will teach them and bring to remembrance the things that he taught them. Again in 16:13, Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will lead them “into all the truth” and reveal things that are yet to come. In 15:26, Jesus call the Helper the “Spirit of truth” and states that he will bear witness about Jesus, and in 16:14 he will bring glory to Jesus.

In John 16:7, he tells the disciples that although they are sad about him leaving, it is better for him to go and the Holy Spirit to come and be with them. Connecting those words back to John 14:12, “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father,” the advantage includes the ongoing presence of the Spirit in their lives as well as the power of the Spirit working in and through them to do works beyond those that Jesus did!⁵⁷

Jesus continues describing the work of the Holy Spirit in John 16:8-11 in regard to the conviction in those who do not know or acknowledge Jesus, “he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment.” Unfortunately, the conservative

56. Craig L. Blomberg, “Holy Spirit,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1996), 346.

57. Kruse, “John,” *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 296.

church in North America has become known as the ones who try to bring conviction on the world by judging and condemning their lifestyles and choices. Jesus made it clear that it is the Holy Spirit's job to convict, not his disciples.'

Throughout the book of Acts, we read of the apostles filling of the Holy Spirit resulting in miracles, powerful preaching, and expansion of the kingdom of God through the growth of the church. Jesus leaves his disciples with the command to wait in Jerusalem for "you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5b). Then in verse eight, he tells them the outcome of being baptized with the Spirit: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Only days later, the Holy Spirit fell on the disciples and the church was birthed (Acts 2). The defining moment at the birth of the church was the coming of the Holy Spirit, resulting in supernatural power in and upon the disciples, resulting in a spreading witness, miracles, and the salvation of many.⁵⁸

The Holy Spirit gives gifts to every disciple (1 Cor 12; Rom 12:4-8) that are to be used to build up the body. The Apostle Peter divides the spiritual gifts into two main categories, speaking gifts and serving gifts (1 Pet 4:10-11), both of which are to be used to serve one another. Making disciples is a supernatural process of transformation that is facilitated by the Holy Spirit in the lives of Jesus' followers. An essential characteristic of a disciple of Jesus is to be filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

58. Acts 2:41 states that 3,000 were baptized and added to their number; in Acts 4:4 the number of men (not counting women and children) grew to about 5,000; Acts 6:7 states that "the word of God continued to increase, and the number of disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem."

Jesus' Command to Make Disciples

Jesus' Great Commission to his disciples is the capstone of three and a half years of ministry. It takes place after the resurrection and in Galilee, where Jesus instructed the disciples to go and meet him at the mountain (Matt 28:7, 16):

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt 28:18-20).

Authority

Jesus begins his commission with the basis for why they should go and make disciples: "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." Throughout his ministry, Jesus demonstrated this authority and the people marveled; in his teaching (Matt 7:29), in forgiving sins (Matt 9:6), and in his miracles (Matt 9:8). In the description of the temptation of Jesus found in Luke 4:6-7, the devil offered to give all earthly authority if Jesus would bow down and worship him. Yet now, after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, Satan was defeated and all authority belonged to Jesus, not only earthly authority, but ultimate authority over all the universe. In the Great Commission, Jesus delegates his authority to his disciples by sending them out to be his representatives on earth, making disciples of all nations. Hagner writes, "It is accordingly the one who has 'all authority in heaven and on earth,' i.e., the sovereign authority of God, who now sends out his disciples on the mission to evangelize the world. This is to provide them in turn with authority and supply them with confidence as they go."⁵⁹

59. Donald A. Hagner, "Matthew 14-28," Vol. 33B in *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, 1995), 886.

Jesus is God, the creator of the heavens and the earth (John 1:1-3). He has existed since eternity past and before there was anything else, he existed as God. When he chose to create, he spoke and the universe came into existence (Psalm 33:6; Col 1:16). Now he is seated at the right hand of the Father and rules over all (Eph 1:20-23). Nothing can oppose him and succeed because he is supreme (Col 1:18; Rom 8:31-39)! What he decrees will be done. Based on that authority, Jesus says, “Go therefore and make disciples...” (Matt 28:19a).

Make Disciples

At the heart of this passage is the command to “make disciples,” which resulted in the world-wide movement of Christianity to this day. “It is the risen Jesus, to whom all authority in heaven and earth has been given, who here commissions his disciples and in effect the church of every period of history.”⁶⁰ The structure of the commission “consists syntactically of the main verb μαθητεύσατε, ‘make disciples,’ with three parallel subordinate participles: πορευθέντες, ‘going,’ βαπτίζοντες, ‘baptizing,’ and διδάσκοντες, ‘teaching.’”⁶¹ In this short command, Jesus gives the mission of the church and the methodology to carrying out the mission.

Go

Making disciples hearkens back to Jesus’ call of the disciples found in Mark 3:14-15, to follow him in community with other disciples, to *be with him* as his apprentices until they *become like him* and are sent to *do the things that he did*. The methodology

60. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 889.

61. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 882.

begins with “go” or “as you are going.”⁶² This implies being sent by Jesus as opposed to not going and expecting people to come to us. Whether a person is in vocational ministry or not, we are all called to make disciples, and we are all called to go and to take the message of life in Jesus with us as we go. The good news is that we are to do this in the community of the local church, not on our own. The New Testament church knew nothing of disciples living apart from the community of believers, rather, community and fellowship were essential parts of how they engaged their faith and journey of being apprentices of Jesus (Acts 2:42-47).

Baptize

The next subordinate participle found in Matthew 28:19 is “baptizing them.” According to Mounce, “Baptism into Christ is baptism into the church, for to be ‘in Christ’ is to be a member of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13; Gal 3:27–29).”⁶³ Tim Lundy equates baptism to the culmination of the evangelistic process whereby a person identifies themselves publicly as a follower of Jesus and joins themselves to a local congregation of believers.⁶⁴ He explains the relationship between the command of “make disciples” and the second two subordinate participles in the following diagram.

62. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 107.

63. Mounce, *Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary*, s.v. baptism.

64. Tim Lundy, *Church 2.0* sermon series, (Los Gatos, CA: Venture Christian Church, January 2019).

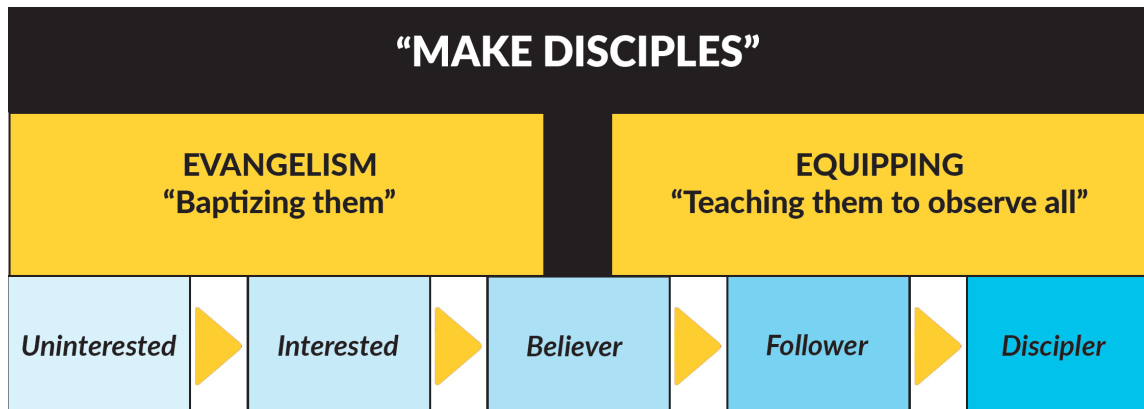


Figure 2-1. Great Commission Process – Church 2.0

Lundy sees the progression of a person on their spiritual journey as going from being uninterested in God, Jesus and church, to becoming interested, then becoming a believer, then a follower, and finally becoming a discipler who reproduces spiritually into the lives of others. As shown in the above diagram, two main components then are evangelizing, relating to “baptizing them”⁶⁵ and equipping, which relates to “teaching to observe all things.”

Regarding baptism, Vincent writes,

When one is baptized into the name of the Trinity, he professes to acknowledge and appropriate God in all that he is and in all that he does for man. He recognizes and depends upon God the Father as his Creator and Preserver; receives Jesus Christ as his only Mediator and Redeemer, and his pattern of life; and confesses the Holy Spirit as his Sanctifier and Comforter.⁶⁶

While there are widely divergent practices in the modern church in regard to baptism (which we will not address in this project), what can be agreed upon is that Jesus

65. While I agree that the two main components of the Great Commission include evangelism and equipping, I would modify the evangelism section of Lundy’s diagram to include “going” and “baptizing”, not just “baptizing them”, as going implies evangelism and completes the diagram with all three of the subordinate participles found in Matthew 28:19-20.

66. Marvin Richardson Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1887), 150.

initiated the practice of baptism as the initiation rite into the body of Christ. Making disciples includes sharing the gospel with them and upon belief, inviting them to take the step of publicly confessing faith in Christ through baptism.

Teaching

The ESV renders the third subordinate participle as “teaching them,” modified by “to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20a). The word “observe” (Greek = τηρέω) means “to take note of, to observe, to fulfill, to keep, especially with reference to doctrine or commandments and precepts.”⁶⁷ Thus, Jesus’ admonition is not merely to instruct others with the goal of increasing their knowledge, but to instruct people with the objective of application of his commands to their lives, informing and directing their thoughts and actions. Chamblin summarizes the command to make disciples in this way: “Discipleship entails both becoming a Christian (being baptized) and being a Christian (obeying Jesus’ teaching).”⁶⁸

Jesus’ Presence

Finally, Jesus concludes his Great Commission call to the disciples with a wonderful promise of his presence to be with them: “I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matt 28:20b). Hagner summarizes this final promise beautifully in stating, “The promise thus applies not only to the future of the disciples themselves but to their successors and their successors’ successors in the church. The evangelist here not only writes history but provides a promise having relevance to his own contemporaries and

67. Ernst Harald Riesenfeld, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 143.

68. J. Knox Chamblin, “Matthew,” in Vol. 3, *Evangelical Commentary on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1995), 760.

indeed to the disciples composing the church down to the end of the eon.”⁶⁹ Not only did Jesus promise that he would send the Holy Spirit to be with them and supply what they need for ministry, he also promised his presence, which must have brought comfort to the disciples.

The Disciple-making of the Apostle Paul

Throughout Acts and the Epistles, we read of Paul including others such as Silas, Timothy, Titus, and John Mark in his missionary journeys and giving them specific assignments to carry out later when they were on their own travels and missionary journeys. Paul affectionately describes Timothy as his son in the faith (1 Cor 4:17). We meet him in Acts 16, when Paul came to Derbe and Lystra. Timothy is described as a disciple, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer. It states that his father was Greek, and probably not a believer in Jesus because of the contrast from the description of his wife as a Jewish believer.⁷⁰ In 2 Timothy, Paul writes that his grandmother Lois first believed, then his mother Eunice (1:5) who passed on biblical teaching and faith to Timothy (3:15).

In his final letter written to his protege, Paul commissions Timothy with, “You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also” (2 Tim 2:1-2). In essence, Paul is personalizing the call to disciple-making with the multiplication into the lives of others who will in turn reproduce into yet others’ lives.

69. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, 889.

70. Marshall, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, 275.

This passage describes four generations of discipleship: Paul taught Timothy, who is to pass on the same teaching to faithful people, who will then teach others the same things as well. Paul describes the quality of the people to whom the truths are to be passed on to as “faithful” (Greek = πιστός), meaning they are trustworthy, demonstrating loyalty.⁷¹ Acts 16 describes Timothy as being “well spoken of” (v2) and Paul described him as “faithful in the Lord” in 1 Corinthians 4:17. In this important verse which could be called the “multiplication commission,” Paul is framing a key practice from his ministry: finding faithful people with whom to partner, invest in, teach, and hand ministry off to so that they can in turn reproduce discipleship into the lives of others.

Christians and Disciples

Throughout the Gospels and Acts, the term “disciple” is used to describe the followers of Jesus. “Disciples” applies to more than just the Twelve, whom Jesus selected from the group of disciples (Luke 6:13). Helm writes, “Not only the 12 but all those who were sympathetic to his teaching and committed to him, are called ‘disciples.’”⁷² In contrast, Wiersbe writes, “Jesus seems to make a distinction between salvation and discipleship. Salvation is open to all who will come by faith, while discipleship is for believers willing to pay a price.”⁷³ I have to disagree with Wiersbe, as Jesus repeatedly pushed against those who would merely follow him out of curiosity or the benefit they might receive from him, such as the free meal when Jesus fed 5,000 men, plus the women and children as recorded in John 6. On the following day, the crowds are seeking to find

71. Liddell and Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1408.

72. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 629.

73. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 232.

Jesus, and he exposed his motives by stating, “You are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves” (John 6:26). Then in verse 53, Jesus offends some of his disciples by saying, “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” As a result, “Many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with him” (v66). Then Jesus addressed the Twelve, “Do you want to go away as well?” (v67b), distinguishing the Twelve from the other disciples. In Acts 6:7, Luke writes that “the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem.”

In Acts 11:26 the term “Christian” is introduced: “And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians.” The wording of this verse is instructive in making a direct correlation between Christian and disciple. The name “Christian” was applied to those who were already disciples, not as a separate class of follower of Jesus. The word “Christian” only appears three times in the New Testament: in Acts 11:26 where the Antiochan disciples are first called Christians, in Acts 26:28 where Paul is preaching to King Agrippa and the King responds, “In a short time would you persuade me to be a Christian?”; and in 1 Peter 4:16 where Peter tells his readers to not be ashamed if they “suffer as a Christian.”

Conclusion

Throughout the gospels, Jesus’ ministry is described as both ministering to the crowds and in equipping his disciples.⁷⁴ He was deliberate in choosing who would be a part of his group of twelve apostles, and even from that group, three men, Peter, James, and John, were privileged to spend more time with him than the others (Mark 5:37, 9:2,

74. Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, New Spire Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2010), 24-29.

14:33). The call to be a disciple is a call to *be with him, become like him, and to do the things that he did.*

Given the fact that Scripture makes no distinction between being a Christian and being a disciple, it is a misrepresentation of the word “Christian” for people to create different classes or qualifications between the two. Jesus’ goal was not to attract large crowds of followers, as demonstrated in John 6 when disciples left and he invited the Twelve to leave as well if they were offended (v67). In the same way, the goal of our churches should not be just to attract large crowds of followers and get them to pray a prayer of salvation, but rather to make disciples, ones who truly count the cost of discipleship and commit to following Jesus.

The mission of the church today is the mission of disciple-making. We are to intentionally go and invite people into a relationship with Jesus. When people respond in faith, we are to baptize them into the fellowship of the body of Christ, and then instruct them in the ways and teachings of Jesus leading to their life transformation and obedience. The indwelling Holy Spirit partners with his people to bring about inner transformation as he comforts, teaches, directs, gifts, and empowers us to live godly lives and to serve God in building his church and his kingdom (Eph 4:15-16).

This chapter examined the concept and biblical teaching about the subject of discipleship. In the next chapter, we will review literature written on the subject of discipleship in order to better understand what discipleship is, and how to carry out the Great Commission command to “make disciples.”

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The previous chapters established the need for effective disciple-making ministries in churches today, and also identified the core outcomes of disciple-making as *being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing the things that Jesus did*. We began this work with the thesis that *a biblical redemptive disciple-making process is an essential tool in the development of redemptive leaders*. In order to clarify redemptive disciple-making and understand its contribution toward forming redemptive leaders, this chapter will examine a broad spectrum of material on the topic of discipleship and spiritual formation.

Disciple and Discipleship Defined

According to Dr. Ed Gallagher, the term “disciple” (*mathetes* in Greek) in the New Testament occurs 261 times.¹ However, it is limited to the Gospels and Acts, and primarily is used as a descriptor of the twelve apostles. The Apostle Paul does not use the term disciple, but instead employs terms such as “saints” (*hagios* = holy ones), “brothers” (or brothers and sisters, *adelphoi*), and “believers” (*pisteuo*). The concept of being a disciple of Jesus is broader than just the usage of the term disciple. Just as different analogies and terms are used for the church, such as “the body of Christ,” “family,” “house,” “bride of Christ,” “vine and branches,” and “temple,” so the various terms used

1. Ed Gallagher, “The Word ‘Disciple’ in the Bible.”
<http://sanctushieronymus.blogspot.com/2012/02/word-disciple-in-bible.html>. Accessed 2/23/2019.

to describe followers of Christ are descriptors that bring out different aspects of who disciples are.

Paul Trabilco proposes that the usage of the term disciple was limited due to the fact that Jesus considered it to be of a different kind of quality of follower, one who physically left home and family and traveled with Jesus.² The disciple was willing to embrace poverty, homelessness, and persecution. I disagree with Trabilco's conclusion based on the command to make disciples (*matheteusate*) found in Matthew 28. If a disciple was narrowly defined, then the only true disciples of Jesus would be traveling itinerant ministers. But as I read the writings of Paul, as well as those found in the Gospels, the call to follow Jesus is broader than this definition. Trabilco gives allowance for two classes of Christians: those who sacrifice everything to follow; and those who remain in their station of life and are "casual" followers of Jesus. While I do agree that some are called to devote their lives to ministry full time, that is not the defining mark of a disciple. According to the Great Commission of Matthew 28, those who are baptized and learn to obey everything Jesus commanded are disciples.

In *DiscipleShift*, Jim Putnam writes that the definition of a disciple must be biblical, and it must be clear.³ He draws his definition of a disciple from Matthew 4:19, "And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'" Beginning with the words "Follow me," Jesus simply lays out the principle that a disciple must follow Jesus. When someone follows another, they give up the right to determine the direction

2. Paul Trabilco, *Self-designations and Group Identity in the New Testament* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 219.

3. Jim Putnam and Bobby Harrington, *Discipleshift: Five Steps That Help Your Church to Make Disciples Who Make Disciples* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2013), 45.

and destination that they are going. When a person chooses to follow Jesus as his disciple, they are surrendering the leadership of their life in order to follow the leadership of Jesus. The second phrase in this verse states that Jesus will do something in a follower's life that leads to transformation: "and I will make you." Putnam writes, "Discipleship, at heart, involves transformation at the deepest levels of our understanding, affection, and will by the Holy Spirit, through the Word of God and in relationship with the people of God."⁴ The third phrase in Jesus' call to his first disciples defines the mission in which they would be called to engage, namely, "fishers of men." He summarizes his definition with, "A disciple is a person who

1. Is following Christ (*head*);
2. Is being changed by Christ (*heart*);
3. Is committed to the mission of Christ (*hands*)."⁵

Putnam's description captures well the biblical concept of a disciple. However, the idea of being an apprentice of Jesus is an important concept that should also be incorporated into our understanding of a disciple. Mark writes that when Jesus selected his twelve apostles out of the larger group, he called them "so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach and have authority to cast out demons" (Mark 3:14b-15). As in the Matthew 4:19 passage, being "with" him implies following, and "sending out to preach and have authority to cast out demons" relates to putting into practice the mission of Jesus. Merging these passages and ideas into a clear and biblical definition of a disciple, I propose the following: "A disciple is an apprentice of Jesus who *will be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did.*"

4. Putnam and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 49.

5. Putnam and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 51.

Now that we have defined what a disciple is, let us move on to defining what discipleship is. As was explained in the previous chapter, the core mission of the church, as found in Matthew 28:18-20, is to make disciples. The word “discipleship” is not found in Scripture but is inferred from this command to make disciples. I use the terms “disciple-making” and “discipleship” interchangeably in this project. Byrley describes discipleship in the following,

Discipleship is the process of devoting oneself to a teacher to learn from and become more like them. For the Christian, this refers to the process of learning the teachings of Jesus and following after his example in obedience through the power of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship not only involves the process of becoming a disciple but of making other disciples through teaching and evangelism.⁶

My definition of discipleship is “an intentional process of leading a person or group of people through growth and ministry experiences and teaching in order that they *will be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do what Jesus did.*”

The Need for Discipleship

Mike Breen and 3 Dimension Ministries conducted a study to determine the questions that unite Christian leaders. They discovered two questions that were common amongst all the leaders surveyed: “What does the future of the church look like?” and “How do we reach people who do not know Jesus?” As they continued to dig, they discovered another question that people were not directly asking, yet they “desperately needed an answer to.” That question was, “How do we make disciples?” He goes on to write, “If you make disciples, you always get the church. But if you make a church, you

6. Chris Byrley, *Lexham Theological Wordbook, Lexham Bible Reference Series*, eds. Douglas Mangum et al. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014), s.v. discipleship.

rarely get disciples.”⁷ Mark Olmos raises a corollary question that digs deeper into the same idea that while church leaders know they are to make disciples, they often fail to accomplish that goal. “Why, with all of the resources we have at our fingertips, do we still struggle to produce sincere, passionate, disciples of Jesus who have denied themselves, taken up their cross, and are following hard after the Master in order to become like Him and carry out His mission to change the world?”⁸ If Breen and Olmos’ conclusions are correct, then the challenge is how to educate and equip church leaders to make disciples, not to convince them that they should make disciples.

Greg Ogden also points to the lack of effective discipleship in our churches when he writes,

My own one-word summary of our current state of discipleship is *superficial*... This *superficiality* comes into focus when we observe the incongruity between the numbers of people in America who profess faith in Jesus Christ and the lack of impact on the moral and spiritual climate of our times... I am suggesting that the lack of Christian influence on culture is a direct result of the lack of depth of transformative discipleship.⁹

He goes on to state that while a 2015 study shows that over 70 percent of Americans self-identify as Christians, we have little influence on our culture. Ogden quotes Barna, who observes, “Christianity would be incredibly influential in our culture if Christians consistently lived their faith.”¹⁰

7. Mike Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture* (Pawleys Island, SC: 3 Dimensions Ministries, 2011), 10-11.

8. Mark Olmos, *Survey of Discipleship Philosophies/Programs* (Project for Phoenix Seminary, 2013), 1.

9. Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship: Making Disciples a Few at a Time*, Rev. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2016), 22-23.

10. George Barna, quoted in Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 39.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer found this to be true in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s as well. In his classic work, *The Cost of Discipleship*, he introduces the difference between cheap grace and costly grace: “Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance, baptism without church discipline, Communion without confession... Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.”¹¹ He correctly recognized that while many professed to be Christians and to follow Christ, their lifestyle did not reflect the hard choices of dying to self and living in obedience. “The response of the disciples is an act of obedience, not a confession of faith in Jesus.”¹²

Putnam and Harrington show the lack of effective discipleship in congregations today by describing the lack of significant difference between Christians and non-Christians. “The core question of effectiveness – the question that ultimately matters – is whether the people who are getting saved are being conformed to the likeness of Christ.” They go on to state that there is little difference in the divorce rates, pornography viewing habits, domestic violence, and drug and alcohol abuse between those who claim to follow Christ and those who do not. “One can’t help but conclude that something is wrong. Where’s the lasting life change? Where are the transformed lives? Why are people in our churches just like the world? Why are we not developing people who are Christlike?”¹³ They propose that the solution to this problem “involves following a clear and

11. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1995), 44-45.

12. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 57.

13. Putnam and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 20-21.

uncomplicated way to train people to be spiritually mature, fully devoted followers of Christ, and then in turn having those disciples make more disciples.”¹⁴

Discipleship as a Spiritual Journey

In 2004, Willow Creek Community Church in Barrington, IL, began a multi-year study on the spiritual life of the church to discover how effective they were at making disciples. In the years that followed, they expanded the survey to include 1000 churches and over 250,000 church attendees.¹⁵ The results were published in the book *Move: What 1000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth*. Two primary measurements that they use is the degree to which a person loves God and loves other people. Prior to the study, Willow was an activity-driven church with the underlying belief that if people attended church, were involved in a small group, and read their Bibles, they would be growing Christians: “the more a person far from God participates in church activities, the more likely it is those activities will produce a person who loves God and loves others.”¹⁶ However, the initial study at Willow Creek and subsequent study of other churches surprised Willow’s church leadership when it showed that there is no direct correlation between involvement in church activities and making mature disciples: “Increased participation in church activities by themselves *barely moved* our people to love God and others more.”¹⁷

14. Putnam and Harrington, *Discipleshift*, 22.

15. Greg Hawkins and Cally Parkinson, *Move: What 1,000 Churches Reveal About Spiritual Growth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011), 10.

16. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 17.

17. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 17.

Two other discoveries from the REVEAL studies shocked the church leaders at Willow Creek: “We had a lot of dissatisfied people,” and “We had a lot of people so dissatisfied that they were ready to leave.” From the initial study, they discovered that almost one in five Willow attendees were stalled spiritually with no idea of how to change. These and the other findings from their study motivated the church leaders to fundamentally change the way they were approaching ministry.

A great contribution from *Move* and the REVEAL studies is the categorization of the place that a person is on their spiritual journey, what the authors call the Spiritual Continuum. The first category, Exploring Christ, describes those who are not yet believers, but are open and are learning about who Jesus is and what it means to follow him. The next phase is Growing in Christ, used to describe those who have made a decision to trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, and are discovering the foundations of their faith and seeing those truths begin to impact their lives. At this place in their journey, they are dependent on mentors and others for their faith walk. The third phase on the Spiritual Continuum is Close to Christ. These people are living with “an increasing spiritual certainty - a growing confidence in the existence, dependability, and power of God’s presence in their lives.”¹⁸ They are no longer looking to others for their primary spiritual leadership, but have instead taken ownership of their own growth and spiritual journey, and demonstrate greater involvement in spiritual practices. The final category on the Spiritual Continuum is Christ-Centered. People who are in this category have

18. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 67.

surrendered their lives fully to Jesus, choosing to draw near to him daily and to follow his leading in all they do.¹⁹ See Figure 3-1 below:²⁰

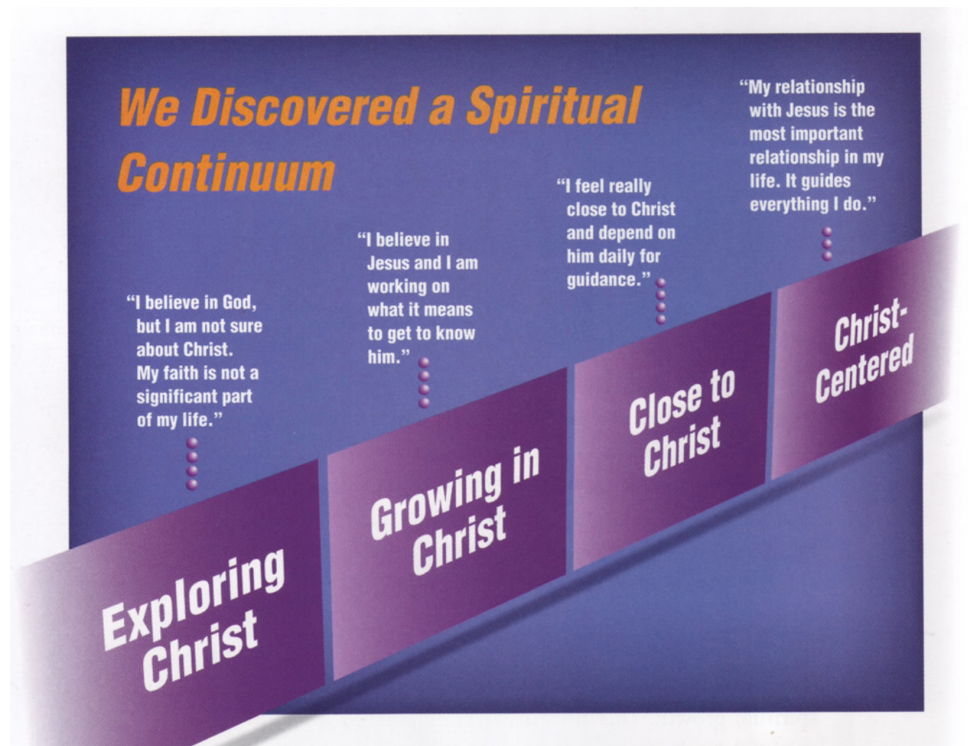


Figure 3-1. Move Spiritual Continuum

As described in the previous chapter, Tim Lundy uses a similar categorization of a spiritual continuum in his ministry at Venture Christian Church, but adds a category prior to Exploring Christ that he calls "Uninterested" to describe those who see no relevance of Jesus, God, the gospel, or the church to their lives.²¹

19. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 84-85.

20. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 21.

21. Tim Lundy, *Church 2.0* sermon series, (Los Gatos, CA: Venture Christian Church, January 2019).

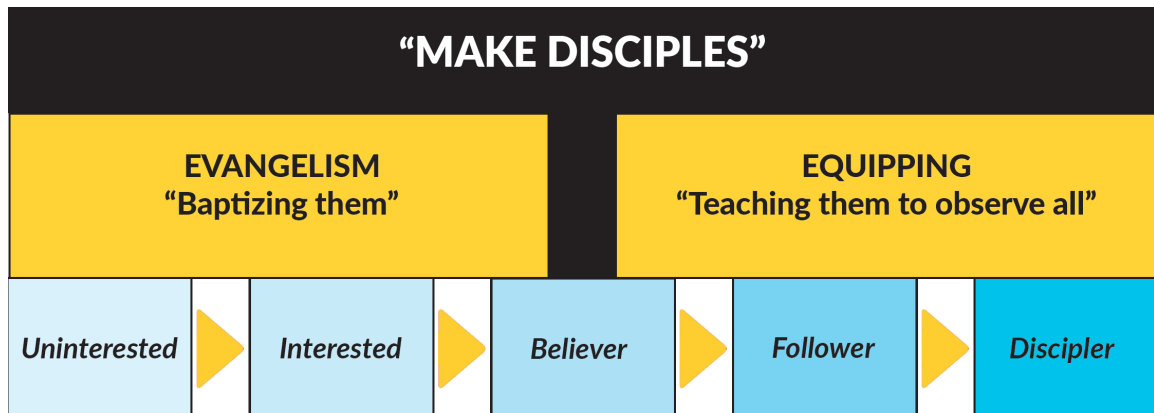


Figure 3-2. Great Commission Process – Church 2.0

The other categories in Lundy's model correlate more or less to the four stages of the Move Spiritual Continuum. An emphasis in Lundy's model that I prefer over the Spiritual Continuum model is the recognition that someone who is at the mature end of the spectrum is to be a discipler, intentionally investing into the lives of other to help them become mature followers of Christ as well, and who will in turn disciple yet others.

The idea of spiritual pathway or continuum also aids thinking and planning in how to best disciple people, based on what they need at their phase of the spiritual journey. Peter writes, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation - if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Pet 2:2-3). The writer of Hebrews also addresses the need for different levels of spiritual food based on spiritual maturity: "You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil" (Heb 5:12b-14). Thus, in defining a disciple-making plan for a ministry or church, one should offer teaching and experiences at different levels to address the needs of the individual at their point on their spiritual journey, and to help

them to continue to move forward in their growth until they likewise become disciple-makers.²²

Another positive outcome of the Move study was to identify key factors that provided movement along the Spiritual Continuum. There were four primary catalysts of movement: spiritual beliefs and attitudes, organized church activities, personal spiritual practices, and spiritual activities with others.²³ See Figure 3-3 below:



Figure 3-3. Categories of Spiritual Catalysts

The three movements as depicted in the figure above were described as Early Spiritual Growth (moving people from Exploring Christ to Growing in Christ),

22. See Appendix A for an overview of the Venture Christian Church connection and discipleship pathway.

23. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 107.

Intermediate Spiritual Growth (moving people from Growing in Christ to Close to Christ), and Advanced Spiritual Growth (moving people from Close to Christ to Christ-Centered). For each of the three movements, the researchers identified five key practices that moved people from one category to the next, and one most important practice for that movement. In each case, the most important practice is listed first. For Movement 1, the five practices included “belief in salvation by grace, belief in the Trinity, serving the church, praying for guidance frequently, and reflecting on the meaning of Scripture.” For Movement 2, the five practices were, “believing in a personal God actively involved in their life, praying to seek guidance daily, reflecting on Scripture frequently, having six or more meaningful spiritual conversations with non-Christians in a year, and tithing.” For Movement 3, the five practices were, “a willingness to risk everything for the sake of Christ, deciding that Christ is first, embracing an identity in Christ, believing in the authority of the Bible, and reflecting on Scripture daily.”²⁴

Jesus’ Model of Discipleship

I first encountered *The Master Plan of Evangelism* by Dr. Robert Coleman as a college student when I got involved in Campus Crusade for Christ. My discipler and campus director, Eric Leong, assigned it as reading to our leadership group. Dr. Coleman’s simple but effective treatment of disciple-making went back to the gospels and looked at how Jesus selected, trained, and deployed his followers. It is interesting that Dr. Coleman uses the word “evangelism” in the title of his book, rather than “discipleship.” While he described Jesus’ pattern of making disciples, he correctly

24. Olmos, *Survey of Discipleship Philosophies/Programs*, 16.

demonstrates that the method of evangelism is disciple-making. By investing in a few in the context of an evangelistic and teaching ministry, Jesus multiplied himself through those he trained.

Coleman writes, “His concern was not with the programs to reach the multitudes, but with the men whom the multitudes would follow... Men were to be his method of winning the world to God.”²⁵ Jesus spent the majority of his time with these disciples, instructing them, including them in his ministry trips, performing miracles in their presence, and leading them toward his desired end of being disciple-makers. In contrast, much of the energy, financial resources, and staffing in our churches today focus on the weekend services rather than on disciple-making. Paul Helm summarizes the early disciples’ experience as receiving the teaching of Jesus, and then teaching others in turn, and being empowered by Jesus to do ministry including healing, deliverance and proclaiming the message of salvation.²⁶

Much evangelical preaching today focuses on getting people to make a decision for Jesus, with the declaration of faith in Christ. Bonhoeffer challenges this practice as incomplete, pointing to Jesus’ call of people not only to believe in him, but also to take action in some way to follow him. “When he called men to follow him, Jesus was summoning them to a *visible act of obedience*. To follow Jesus was a public act.”²⁷ This also applies to all who would believe today, following Jesus in obedience and in a public way. Bonhoeffer goes on to assert that baptism is a public and visible act of obedience.

25. Robert E. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, New Spire Edition (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2010), 21.

26. Elwell and Beitzel, *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 629.

27. Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 233.

While I would not agree with his Lutheran theology on baptism, evangelicals could be instructed in this point in using the baptism event as a teaching opportunity and a call to follow Jesus in discipleship. My experience of baptism in evangelical churches has been more focused on the public proclamation of the conversion experience, and less about being forward looking in the call to discipleship and a life of obedience and movement along a spiritual pathway.

Dr. Robert Mayer writes, “The key word in conversion is not ‘decision’ but ‘allegiance.’ To come to Christ is to declare our allegiance to him, not merely to ‘decide’ that he may be someone special. To declare ‘allegiance’ is to become a follower and begin a journey of faith and discipleship.”²⁸ His perspective clarifies well the difference between a decision of salvation and true conversion. Becoming a follower of Jesus does involve a decision of faith, but it is also a decision of surrender and allegiance to Jesus as master of our lives.

Being With Jesus

Following Jesus as a disciple is a relationship. It is not merely a religion that follows rules or rituals, rather, it is rooted in the reality that Jesus is alive and present with us today, and that he wants us to pursue that relationship with him. When he selected the twelve out of his disciples, the first priority was that they would be “with him” (Mark 2:14-15). Since Jesus is not bodily with us today, we need to engage in practices that allow us to connect with him and grow in our relationship with him. Peter Scazzero addresses the lack of being with God as one of the ten symptoms of unhealthy

²⁸ Robert Mayer, notes on thesis review, October 21, 2019, Charlotte, NC.

spirituality. When a person is focused on doing for God instead of being with God, their perspective is wrong. “Our activity for God can only properly flow from a life *with* God.”²⁹ He goes on to write that emotional health and contemplative spirituality “unleash a revolution in our lives, positioning us so that God can mold us into the men and women he has called us to be.”³⁰ Contemplative spirituality includes “classic practices and concerns” that can be described as spiritual disciplines.

Spiritual Disciplines

Ruth Haley Barton begins her book, *Sacred Rhythms*, with a description of Christian fatigue syndrome, which is asking so much of people that they do not have time or energy to really connect with God in their lives. In the church where she was serving, they discovered that “between five and nine time commitments *per week* were required of those who wanted to become church members!”³¹ She challenges her reader to become more aware of the deep longings of their souls, and then to reorder their lives to create space for spiritual disciplines that lead to intimacy with God. “The disciplines themselves are basic components of the rhythm of intimacy with God that feed and nourish the soul, keeping us open and available for God’s surprising initiatives in our lives.”³² Barton introduces seven key spiritual disciplines that help a person connect with God. She

29. Peter Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 31-32.

30. Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 40.

31. Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms: Arranging Our Lives for Spiritual Transformation*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006), 9.

32. Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*, 15.

encourages her reader to practice different ones in order to discover their pathway to intimacy with God.

The seven disciplines that Barton advocates include solitude, scripture, prayer, honoring the body, self-examination, discernment, and sabbath. I appreciated her inclusion of honoring the body in her teaching on disciplines. She writes, “our religious traditions have created a false separation between the spiritual realm and the material world, leaving us ‘an ambiguous legacy’ regarding the body.”³³ Being aware of our health and cultivating good habits of eating, sleep, and exercise can have a positive impact on our intimacy with God. When we are tired, depressed or sick, our desire and energy to pursue relationship with God can wane.

For the new believer a good place to begin in spiritual disciplines is what in my tradition was called a “quiet time.” It includes getting alone with God and spending time reading and reflecting on Scripture, possibly journaling, and talking with God in prayer. Over the years I have used many different quiet time methods, which I believe have been helpful in keeping the connection with God fresh and not mundane or routine. One of my favorite methods of quiet time was developed by Lin Smith of Church Dynamics.³⁴ It is based on the premise that whenever you read Scripture, you will discover something that you either need to know, stop, change, or do. This is derived from 2 Timothy 3:16, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.”

33. Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*, 81.

34. See Appendix G.

Scazzero breathes freedom into the pursuit of spiritual disciplines by writing, “God has made each of us unique and different. Our goal is the same: union with God in Christ, transformation into his image, and the freeing of our hearts from anything that stands in the way of Christ living in and through us. How we get there will vary... God will have different practices and emphases at different seasons and phases of our lives.”³⁵ He proposes that each disciple create a “rule of life” that acts as a framework of spiritual disciplines and practices to facilitate emotional health and contemplative spirituality, breaking them into four categories: prayer, rest, work/activity, and relationships. The disciplines of prayer include Scripture reading, silence and solitude, daily office (prayer) and study. Practices of rest include sabbath, simplicity, and play and recreation. Habits in the category of work/activity include service and mission, and care for the physical body. The final area of relationships includes emotional health, family, and community (companions for the journey).³⁶ Creating a rule of life includes selecting the activities and disciplines in each of the four areas that will develop greater intimacy with God and scheduling them into your life as a priority.

Becoming Like Jesus

Embracing Biblical Truth

One of the final takeaways from the *Move* study (out of eight discoveries) states that “Nothing has a greater impact on spiritual growth than reflection on Scripture.”³⁷

35. Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 199.

36. Scazzero, *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*, 199-200.

37. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 20.

Paul wrote in Romans 10:17, “So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” And to further explain the importance of Scripture in our lives, Paul stated, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim 3:16-17).

An essential component of any discipleship ministry must be the teaching and intake of God’s Word. As seen in the progression of a person to greater maturity, personal spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading, Bible study, meditation, and memorization all play an increasing role in a person’s life as they mature. In the admonition of Romans 12:2a, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...,” our thinking and beliefs, rooted in the mind are renewed by the reflective intake of God’s Word and the application of it to our lives through the instruction of the Holy Spirit, resulting in a transformation of our character and lifestyle.³⁸

Henrichsen identifies nine characteristics of a faithful person who is a good candidate for discipleship. Two relate to the place of Scripture in his or her life: “He has adopted as his objective in life the same objective God sets forth in the Scriptures,” and “He has a love for the Word of God.”³⁹ Implied in these two essentials are the regular intake and application of the Word, not merely for increase of information, but to draw

38. John A. Witmer, “Romans,” Vol. 2 in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 487.

39. Walter A. Henrichsen, *Disciples are Made Not Born: Equipping Christians to Multiply Themselves Through Ministry to Others* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1988), 12-14.

near to God in intimate relationship, to understand his heart and mind, and to allow the Word to shape our thoughts, decisions, and direction in life.

While biblical content is a highly important factor in disciple-making, it should not be the only focus: “People will begin to define their discipleship exclusively in terms of intellect. That is, if you know the right answers, you are following Jesus more and more closely.”⁴⁰ As explained in the previous chapter, redemptive discipleship leads people to *be with Jesus, become like Jesus, and do the things that Jesus did.*

In *Building a Discipling Culture*, Mike Breen asserts that being a disciple is becoming a lifelong learner of Jesus. He goes on to present three primary different ways that we learn, and writes that “we learn best when there is a dynamic interplay between all three at one time: 1) Classroom/Lecture passing on of information, 2) Apprenticeship, and 3) Immersion.”⁴¹ Jesus included all three of these models in equipping his disciples. His classroom was mobile, sometimes in the synagogue (Luke 4:15), sometimes in a grain field (Mark 2:23-27), and at times on the side of a mountain (Matt 5:1). The disciples were apprentices by watching Jesus do ministry, then reproducing that ministry when he sent them out to preach, heal, and cast out demons (Luke 9:1-6). Their ministry was continually one of immersion as Jesus traveled about and the disciples were continually with him. Breen writes, “As we know it today, discipleship is *mostly* about that first kind of learning: the classroom experience... We learn from the pastor’s teaching on Sunday. We learn from Bible studies. We go to Sunday School. We learn

40. Eric Geiger, Michael Kelley and Philip Nation, *Transformational Discipleship: How People Really Grow* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2012), 207.

41. Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 21.

from small group discussion guides and DVDs. We learn from reading books. We learn from taking classes at church.”⁴²

The remainder of *Building a Discipling Culture* presents a reproducing model for growing a disciple-making church, ministry, and movement. The author contends that from his experience, there are three components necessary: A discipleship vehicle which they call a “huddle,” access to your life as a disciple-maker, and a discipling language which includes core principles that they all communicate in the same way – through images drawn to represent biblical truths.⁴³ Because this model employs an orientation that communicates through images, it may flourish in an oral culture and be more appropriate than some of the more study-intensive discipleship models in American cultures where education and study are of lesser importance. While I appreciate Breen’s core principles of discipleship and learning styles to incorporate into the discipleship experience, I find his presentation to be more of a handbook to multiply ministries within their model rather than a resource to learn from to apply to the context of a local church.

Transformation Through the Work of the Holy Spirit

In *Transformational Discipleship*, the authors contend that the discipleship that we must pursue in the church is one that results in transformed lives. “Everyone is a disciple, but not everyone is transformed. Only one Leader brings transformation to His disciples. Discipleship apart from Jesus is nontransformational.”⁴⁴ Referring to the command in Romans 12:2, “Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the

42. Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 25.

43. Breen, *Building a Discipling Culture*, 38.

44. Geiger, Kelley and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 8.

renewing of your mind...”, they write, “We will in fact, either be conformed or transformed. Jesus isn’t merely interested in conforming-changing the appearance and behavior of people. He’s interested in transformation.”⁴⁵ Being a follower of Jesus is not simply learning the rules and then conforming to the correct behaviors. Rather, it involves the inner life and character transformation, metamorphosis, that comes from the Holy Spirit’s indwelling presence.

The authors point out two common substitutes for transformation, both of which can be mistaken for discipleship: knowledge and behavior modification. When ministry focuses on these two substitutes, the result can be legalism, pride, or discouragement that one can never live up to the standard expected. These substitutes go back to the idea of conformity rather than transformation. It may seem easier to learn the rules and then follow them, but it will result in the same problem that Jesus had with the religious leaders of his day. In his rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus declares, “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness” (Matt 23:27-28). If our ministries of discipleship today focus only on increased knowledge and behavioral conformity, the results can be the same.

The content in *Transformational Discipleship* came from an extensive research project conducted in 2010 by the research team at Lifeway. Their goal was to understand believers’ spiritual lives and level of maturity. After surveying 1,000 Protestant pastors in

45. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 9.

the United States plus 4,000 Protestant church attendees in both Canada and the United States, they concluded that “there is a discipleship deficiency in most churches resulting in a lack of transformation.”⁴⁶

In the survey, they discovered eight primary domains that point to spiritual health and ultimately transformational discipleship. The combination of these eight factors are what the authors call the “Transformational Sweet Spot.”⁴⁷ The eight factors include: Bible Engagement, Obeying God and Denying Self, Serving God and Others, Sharing Christ, Exercising Faith, Seeking God, Building Relationships, and Being Unashamed. The authors emphasize that what they discovered is not a prescriptive discipleship model to be adopted, but rather are key principles to include in each church’s ministry.

Emotional Health and Transformation

In *No Man Left Behind*, the authors present a spiritual growth continuum in regard to men’s ministry that they call the Wide-Deep Continuum. Their model includes needs at each step on the continuum, as well as key activities and events to offer to help men at their place in the spiritual journey. However, they add another component beyond the Move and Lundy models that spans all the other categories: hurting men (see Figure 3-4 below).⁴⁸ This correctly acknowledges that regardless of the level of spiritual maturity or the place a person is on their spiritual journey, they may encounter hardship, loss or

46. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 16.

47. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 58.

48. Patrick Morley, David Delk and Brett Clemmer. *No Man Left Behind: How to Build and Sustain a Thriving Disciple-Making Ministry for Every Man in Your Church* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 2006), 130-143.

wounding. In order to effectively help people grow in their spiritual lives, their emotional needs and hurts must be addressed as well.

The Wide – Deep Continuum			
WIDE			DEEP
Men who need Christ	Cultural Christians	Biblical Christians	Mature Disciples / Leaders
<i>Felt needs ----- Spiritual needs</i>			
Belonging Friendship Fun De-stressing	Purpose/Significance Finances Parenting Identity	Bible study Discipleship	Know God better Bible knowledge Spiritual disciplines
<i>Activities & Events</i>			
Sports Recreation BBQ	Service projects Seminars Adventure retreats	Men's groups Discipleship groups Retreats Mission trips	Prayer groups Leadership development
HURTING MEN			

Figure 3-4. Wide-Deep Continuum in Men's Ministry

Regardless of their spiritual maturity, all men go through difficulties at various times in their lives. At any given point, as many as half the men in your church may be going through marital problems, financial issues, struggling with a wayward child, involvement with Internet porn, dealing with the loss of a job or struggling with the health crisis of a loved one.⁴⁹

The authors of *No Man Left Behind* encourage churches to offer solutions to these challenges through programs, classes or counseling.

49. Morley, Delk and Clemmer, *No Man Left Behind*, 133.

Willard and Simpson also address the issue of hurting men when they write, “when we come to deal with the spiritual formation of our social life, we have to start from *woundedness*.”⁵⁰ They go on to describe the source of most wounding,

The exact nature of the poison of sin in our social dimension is fairly easy to describe, though extremely hard to deal with. It has two forms. They are so closely related that they really are two forms of the same thing: lovelessness, a lack of proper regard and care for others. These two forms are *assault*, or attack, and *withdrawal*, or distancing.

Brisco and Ford add a third form of lovelessness, *exclusion*, which stems from not being included in activities, events, or teams.⁵¹ All three of these actions are forms of rejection, which flow out of our own weaknesses, hurts, fears, and selfishness. Willard and Simpson state that instead of these rejecting behaviors, “*Every* contact with another human being should be one of goodwill and respect with a *readiness* to acknowledge, make room for, or assist the other in suitable ways.”⁵²

Peter Scazzero has devoted his current ministry to transformation of the inner life. His core philosophy of ministry is the belief that one cannot be spiritually healthy if they are not emotionally healthy. This revelation came as the result of going through difficulties in ministry and his marriage that caused him to seek out counseling and to begin to address the inner wounds and dysfunctions that came from his family of origin. Scazzero writes,

For nearly two decades, I had ignored the emotional component in my spiritual growth and relationship with God. It didn’t matter how many books I might read or how much I devoted myself to prayer, I would remain stuck in repeated cycles

50. Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ’s Pattern for Spiritual Transformation* (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2005), 150.

51. Brad Brisco and Lance Ford, *Missional Essentials: A Guide for Experiencing God’s Mission in Your Life* (Kansas City, MO: The House Studio, 2012), 73.

52. Willard and Simpson, *Revolution of Character*, 152.

of pain and immaturity unless and until I allowed Jesus Christ to transform aspects of my life that were deep beneath the surface.⁵³

While the scope of this project does not include additional study on the causes and diagnoses of woundedness or how to address the woundedness in a Christian's life, those who design their discipleship ministry should be aware that a portion of those they work with will be dealing with some kind of hurt. This awareness should lead them to either provide ministries to address the woundedness or refer them to appropriate support and recovery groups or to counseling. A good place to begin in providing ministry to address these areas are with two discipleship resources from Peter Scazzero based on the Emotionally Healthy Model: *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* and *Emotionally Healthy Relationships*. Both are available on his website.⁵⁴

Loving Relationships

While it is important to build systems and structures to facilitate spiritual growth in our churches, there is another reality discovered by the *Move* researchers: "Spiritual Growth is not linear or predictable. It is a complex process as unique as each individual, and it progresses at a pace determined by each person's circumstances and the activities of the Holy Spirit."⁵⁵ Discipleship is a spiritual exercise that must be done in relationship, addressing individual needs and differences as they arise and helping people make spiritual progress as the Holy Spirit works in them.

53. Peter Scazzero, *The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 16.

54. <https://www.emotionallyhealthy.org/>.

55. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 26.

The authors of *Transformational Discipleship* assert that there are several key practices to include in a discipleship model that will lead to their eight factors of the Transformational Sweet Spot: intake of biblical truth, practicing spiritual disciplines, and interdependent community.⁵⁶ While the first two can be practiced alone, in isolation from other Christians, it is the third practice that ties them together in a transformational way: “Transformation best occurs when a believer is in an interdependent posture with other believers.”⁵⁷ While this third factor of community is essential for discipleship and transformation, the authors warn that, “Christian community is supernatural, but not always spectacular... Ministry and church leaders must quit promising spectacular community and instead offer the normal and messy because the normal and messy community is supernatural and transformational over time.”⁵⁸

James Bryan Smith affirms the importance of discipleship in the context of interdependent community by stating that transformation “involves four basic elements: (1) changing the stories in our minds, (2) engaging in new practices (3) in reflection and dialogue with others who are on the same path, (4) all under the leading of the Holy Spirit.”⁵⁹ In answer to the question, “How do we become like Christ?”, Smith writes, “I have come to believe that the problem is not that we do not want to change, nor is the problem that we are not trying to change. The problem is that we’re not training. We have

56. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, chapters 4-8.

57. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 159.

58. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 167.

59. James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 23-24.

never been taught a reliable pattern of transformation.”⁶⁰ He goes on to say, “When the Spirit has changed our narrative sufficiently, we begin to think differently. As a result we begin to believe in and trust a good and loving God who is strong and powerful.”⁶¹

Doing What Jesus Did

Ministry Experiences

Jesus’ ministry to his disciples included far more than communicating truth and information to them. By traveling with them, he included them in his daily routines and modeled for them how he drew close to the Father and how he ministered to others. Coleman speaks of Jesus’ continual focus on being an example to his disciples: “Jesus saw to it that his disciples learned his way of living with God and man.”⁶² In Luke 11, the disciples were with Jesus and observed him praying, then asked him to teach them to pray. Their request was not to be taught about prayer, but to “teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1b). Coleman reflects on the importance of the development of skill in prayer: “Unless they grasped the meaning of prayer, and learned how to practice it with consistency, not much would ever come from their lives.”⁶³

After Jesus washed the disciples’ feet, he said, “For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you” (John 13:15). Even to the end of his ministry on earth, Jesus included his disciples, and modeled for them how to

60. Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God*, 20.

61. Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God*, 30.

62. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 71.

63. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 73.

live and do ministry. In addition to modeling, Jesus delegated ministry to them. Coleman writes that “He used his disciples in other ways to help along his work, such as caring for the manual burdens of getting food and arranging accommodations for the group as they followed him. He also let them baptize some people who were aroused by his message (John 4:2).”⁶⁴ After the initial period of teaching, modeling, and growth, Jesus sent his disciples out to do ministry. He gave them instructions and authority to preach the good news of the kingdom (Luke 9:2), and to “heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons” (Matt 10:8a). Coleman believes this was probably at least a full year into Jesus ministry with the disciples by his side, and says, “This observation perhaps should cause us to be more patient with new converts who follow us.”⁶⁵

Another practical way to make discipleship experiential is teaching and modeling for others how to have a quiet time, then doing a quiet time with them. Periodic check-ins with your disciple should include sharing what you are learning in your times alone with the Lord, and hearing what they are learning and how they are drawing near to him. See Appendix G for a simple quiet time method to use in training a disciple to grow in intimacy with Christ.

Missional Living

Closely related to ministry experiences in discipleship is missional living. Brisco and Ford state that “God is a missionary God who *sends* a missionary church... ‘missional’ is an adjective to describe the church as a sent, missionary entity.”⁶⁶ Jesus

64. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 80.

65. Coleman, *The Master Plan of Evangelism*, 80.

66. Ford and Brisco, *Missional Essentials*, 18.

ministered to people out in the community, both meeting their practical needs and preaching the good news of the kingdom in order to meet their spiritual needs. When he sent the twelve out on their first mission trip (Luke 9), and later the seventy-two disciples who were sent out (Luke 10), they were to meet practical needs through healing sicknesses and casting out demons that oppressed and afflicted people.

In *Discover Your Mission Now*, Dave Ferguson writes, “You were born with a God-given mission for your life... It is knowing and living out your God-given mission that brings purpose, meaning and a fulfilling way to make a difference with your days.”⁶⁷ A few pages later, Ferguson describes Jesus’ mission as being “made up of three life-changing and world-changing elements: Reach, Restore and Reproduce.”⁶⁸ Reach is about “reaching people who are far from God.” Restore is about restoring “God’s dream and desire from the very beginning... for us to live in perfect relationship with him and with each other.” And the third element is “Reproducing this mission in the lives of others.”⁶⁹ He goes on to describe five practices of Jesus that embodied this mission and proposes that followers of Jesus today adopt the same practices.

Ferguson introduced the acronym “B.L.E.S.S.” to capture Jesus’ five missional practices:⁷⁰ B = Begin with prayer by making a regular practice of praying for your neighbors, co-workers, and others in your sphere of influence. L = Listen to them, which requires us to spend time with others who do not know Jesus. Jesus was known as a

67. Dave Ferguson, et. al., *Discover Your Mission Now: 5 Simple Practices to Change Your World* (Missio Publishing, www.missiopublishing.com, 2012) E-book, 13.

68. Ferguson, et. al., *Discover Your Mission Now*, 19.

69. Ferguson, et. al., *Discover Your Mission Now*, 19-22.

70. Ferguson, et. al., *Discover Your Mission Now*, 28.

“friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Luke 11:19), which he did not deny, but rather demonstrated by eating meals in their homes (Matt 9:10), and not being repulsed when a sinful woman anointed his feet and touched him (Luke 7:36-50). E = Eat with them. S = Serve them, finding a practical need that we can meet. Finally, the second S = Share your Story with them. With my training through Campus Crusade, often this final step was our first step: share your testimony and go through the gospel by sharing the Four Spiritual Laws. Rather than focusing primarily on the act of sharing the gospel with them, we should engage in missional living, cultivating relationships with those who are not in relationship with Jesus, and then when the Holy Spirit presents the opportunity, share our story and invite them to come and meet Jesus as well.

Multiplication

Jesus’ ministry and commission to his disciples was one of multiplication; he intentionally invested in the lives of twelve men who would in turn reach and disciple others. Paul’s ministry and commission to Timothy was also one of multiplication. As we pursue the disciple-making mandate found in the Great Commission, we must include a priority of multiplication.

A typical model of ministry in a church is based on trained teachers (often clergy) who preach and teach. People attend worship services and classes to grow in their understanding. There may be great outreach ministries where people come into relationship with Christians or hear the gospel and come to faith in Jesus. These people are added to the church and to the classes or groups as a way to provide nurture and instruction for their spiritual journey. If a pastor is especially gifted, the church may grow in numbers, but primarily through addition.

A multiplication model of ministry takes a different approach, and is less dependent on gifted teachers, preachers, and evangelists. A discipler begins by investing in a few people, who over time grow in the three key outcomes of discipleship: being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing the things Jesus did. These people may be new believers or further along in their spiritual journey. Eventually, which may be months or years, those who are being disciplined begin to disciple others. When this reproduction reaches into other generations, multiplication has begun and the long-term potential for kingdom-impact grows tremendously.

Henrichsen shares an illustration of multiplication in *Disciples are Made Not Born*, comparing the impact of an evangelist who leads 1,000 people per day to Christ versus a discipler who leads one person per year to Christ and then discipled that person, and the next year they both lead someone to Christ and disciple them, and the multiplication continues. Initially the evangelist's results are amazing but could never reach the population of the world in his lifetime. On the other hand, because of the power of multiplication, the fruit of the discipler matches the evangelist by year twenty-four, and soon reaches the population of the whole world. He summarizes by stating, "Multiplication may be costly and, in the initial stages, much slower than addition, but in the long run, it is the most effective way of accomplishing Christ's Great Commission... and the only way."⁷¹

The following chart illustrates the difference between being a discipler and being a multiplying disciple-maker. In the left column, the discipler wins and discipled three people per year for ten years. In the right column, the disciple-maker begins by discipling

71. Henrichsen, *Disciples are Made Not Born*, 136-138.

four people in the first year. Each following year, she discipless four more people, and seventy-five percent of those discipled in previous years disciple four people.

Table 3-1. Comparison between Addition and Multiplication in Discipleship

Addition: 1 person discipless 3 people/year	Multiplication: Each person discipless 4 people/year, and 75% reproduce
Year 1 = 4 people	Year 1 = 5 people
Year 2 = 7	Year 2 = 20
Year 3 = 10	Year 3 = 80
Year 4 = 13	Year 4 = 320
Year 5 = 16	Year 5 = 1,280
Year 6 = 19	Year 6 = 5,120
Year 7 = 22	Year 7 = 20,480
Year 8 = 25	Year 8 = 81,920
Year 9 = 28	Year 9 = 327,680
Year 10 = 31	Year 10 = 1,310,720

As demonstrated by this chart, at the end of ten years there are thirty-one discipless people if one person devotes themselves to discipling three people per year. But by adding in the component of multiplication, if three of four discipless multiply, the difference is staggering! Over one million are discipling and discipling others at the end of ten years! Of course, this assumes that seventy-five percent of those discipless catch the vision to disciple others and make the commitment to continuing to disciple people who will win and disciple others. In reality, some people are ready to disciple others after one year, and others may need additional time being discipless in order to become healthy and mature enough to disciple others.

Leadership and Discipleship

Another final takeaway from the *Move* study was that “Leadership matters.”⁷² The role of church leaders of believing in, practicing, and being champions for disciple-making cannot be understated. I believe that it must become part of the DNA of the church, from the senior leadership and up (considering that we’re called to be servant leaders!). “The mark of leadership is servanthood,” Walter Henrichsen says in his classic *Disciples are Made Not Born*.⁷³ He goes on to describe the essential characteristic of servant leadership in recruiting those to disciple and investing in their spiritual development. Ogden asserts, “If a church is going to become a disciple-making congregation and build a culture of discipleship, it must be the lifestyle of the core leadership, starting with the senior or lead pastor.”⁷⁴ It cannot be delegated to a few people who have a “gift” for discipleship. Rather, a disciple-making church will be led by disciple-making leaders.

The authors of *Transformational Discipleship* conclude their book with a focus on the importance of leadership: “We need people who can rightly apply the truth to others in a vulnerable posture. Without that leadership, would-be disciples are just wandering around aimlessly, waiting for one day to turn into the next.”⁷⁵ How sad that many Christians attend church with the hope of growth and change, yet the results are often stagnant or very incremental because there is a lack of intentional leadership within the

72. Hawkins and Parkinson, *Move*, 20.

73. Henrichsen, *Disciples are Made Not Born*, 75.

74. Ogden, *Transforming Discipleship*, 208.

75. Geiger, Kelley, and Nation, *Transformational Discipleship*, 202-203.

church to direct people through a process of transformation. They go on to warn that leaders are not merely theologians who dispense correct information. Rather, disciple-making leaders model discipleship by both investing personal time with those they lead, guiding them through their spiritual formation, as well as developing systems and structures to support ongoing discipleship and multiplication.

The authors of *No Man Left Behind* identify three key aspects of leadership for disciple-making ministry: the senior pastor, a committed leader, and a volunteer leadership team. They refer to this as the “three strands of leadership,” like the cord of three strands in Ecclesiastes 4:12.⁷⁶ Inculcating a disciple-making DNA in a church requires that the leadership team be made up of people who are disciple-makers themselves. As a church begins the journey of transforming into a redemptive disciple-making ministry, top leadership should select mature and faithful men and women to disciple and equip to be disciple-makers.

Discipleship Resources

In this section, I would like to introduce several disciple-making resources that will help a person move from being a follower to a disciple-maker. The scope of this project does not include disciple-making for a new believer, which is equally important. For more information on resources for new believers, see Appendix A, *Discipleship Pathway at Venture Christian Church*; and Appendix I, *Abundant Living - New Believer Follow Up*.

76. Morley, Delk and Clemmer, *No Man Left Behind*, 83.

Discipleship Essentials

One of my favorite discipleship tools is *Discipleship Essentials* by Greg Ogden. In this twenty-five-lesson study, Ogden presents a resource that can take a committed follower of Jesus to being equipped to disciple others. In his introduction, Ogden presents three essential elements to create “the climate for the Holy Spirit to bring about accelerated growth.”⁷⁷ The first is the “unchanging truth of God’s Word,” the second is “transparent relationships,” and the third essential element according to Ogden is “mutual accountability.” In developing *Discipleship Essentials*, Ogden experimented with implementing the material in a one-on-one setting, a group of ten, and in a triad group of three. Based on this experience and subsequent research, he believes that groups of three or four people are the optimal size for making disciples because it shifts the experience from being hierarchical to being relational.⁷⁸

The resource is structured in four sections: Growing up in Christ, which focuses on the personal relationship development of a disciple; Understanding the Message of Christ, which covers seven core doctrinal truths to shape the mind of the disciple; Becoming Like Christ, which includes the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the disciple’s life, as well as other core attitudes and practices; and finally, Serving Christ, which equips and challenges the disciple to put their spiritual gifts into practice in ministry in the church and world. By providing training in these four areas, Ogden presents a well-rounded approach to growth in the life of the disciple.⁷⁹

77. Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, 9.

78. Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, 10.

79. See Appendix C for an outline of the content in *Discipleship Essentials*.

The format of *Discipleship Essentials* includes a significant amount, perhaps 90 minutes to three hours, of homework each week in order to prepare for the weekly group meeting. In a context where there is low education or little motivation for reading, studying, memorizing, and homework in general, Ogden's resource may not be a good choice. And it is not designed for a new believer as it goes well beyond the foundations of faith and has the purpose of equipping disciple-makers. Before any of the lessons in the book, there is a covenant page that a participant is to sign (see Appendix B). The five commitments that the participant agrees to include things such as completing homework, meeting weekly, and being honest and open. The fifth commitment spells out the expectation of reproduction when complete: "Give serious consideration to continuing the discipling chain by committing myself to invest in at least two other people for the year following the initial completion of *Discipleship Essentials*."⁸⁰

This commitment to reproduce is reinforced in chapter one, "Making Disciples," chapter two, "Being a Disciple," and chapter twenty-four, "Sharing the Wealth," which is based on 2 Timothy 2:2 where Paul admonishes Timothy to invest in "reliable men who will be able to teach others also." Having taken three groups through *Discipleship Essentials* personally, the only change that I would make is to place "Sharing the Wealth" at the end of the resource as chapter twenty-five, so it is the last week's discussion and launches the group members out to make their own group of disciples. As the resource currently is structured, chapter twenty-five is a "bonus" chapter that focuses on the use of money.

80. Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, 14.

I had the privilege of meeting with Greg Ogden during the process of writing this thesis-project. He is now retired from church ministry and is living in Monterey, California, where he leads a non-profit ministry that focuses on helping churches, both in the United States and overseas, launch ministries of disciple-making. I was encouraged to hear Ogden's continued passion for the Great Commission. The only shift that I heard that differed from the concepts presented in *Transforming Discipleship* and *Discipleship Essentials* is that he is encouraging quads – groups of four – as just as effective as triads.

The Apprentice Series

James Bryan Smith offers three excellent books, *The Good and Beautiful God*, *The Good and Beautiful Life*, and *The Good and Beautiful Community* as resources and tools to lead people through the process of transformation. With an upward focus, the first book reframes our understanding of God, exposing false narratives such as God is angry at us, he is waiting to punish us, and that he only loves us when we're good, and then replacing these ideas with Jesus' narrative of his Father who is loving, forgiving, and always working for our best. "The God Jesus reveals would never do anything to harm us. He has no malice or evil intentions. He is completely good."⁸¹ In all three books, each chapter is followed by a soul-training exercise to be practiced in order to engage the truths set forth as Jesus' narrative.

The second book, *The Good and Beautiful Life*, also exposes false narratives and replaces them with Jesus' narrative. The content of the book builds on the first book by examining Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as found in Matthew 5-7. Rather than focusing

81. Smith, *The Good and Beautiful God*, 56.

on the nature of God as in the first book, the author focuses in this second book on how we are transformed into the image of Christ and live as citizens in the Kingdom of God. “The Pharisees kept their outer life, which people could see, clean, but their inner life was filthy (Matthew 23:25-26). To enter the kingdom, we must work on our inner life. This is the aim of this book.”⁸² Smith demonstrates that our obedience and transformation flows out of God’s work in us and our partnership by surrender, communing with Christ, and living out of our identity. Our identity should determine our behavior, not the other way around.

The third book in this series, *The Good and Beautiful Community*, moves from the inward focus of book two to an outward focus on our relationship with others. It draws from “the second part of the Great Commandment: loving our neighbor as ourselves.”⁸³ The content of this book unpacks how we can live in loving relationships with both those in the community of faith and those who do not know Christ. As in the previous two books, each of the nine chapters exposes false narratives that we may believe and replaces them with Jesus’ narratives about living in relationship with others. Rather than soul training exercises designed to draw us closer in intimacy with God or to process and grow in personal character, the exercises of book three engage in relationship and serving activities that draw us closer to other people. The book concludes with a chapter on writing a soul-training plan with regular activities that will continue to facilitate growth as an apprentice of Jesus, growth in intimacy with God, in inner character and godliness,

82. James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Life* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 44.

83. James Bryan Smith, *The Good and Beautiful Community* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 10.

and in relationship with our Christian family and the world around us. This soul-training plan is similar to what Scazzero includes in *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* as a “Rule of Life.”

Radical Mentoring

After leading a singles ministry and meeting one-on-one with men for many years, Reggie Campbell started meeting with a group of men in the year 2000. Campbell, a full-time businessman, was exhausted from not being able to keep up with the needs and requests for input on life and faith and decided to invest in a few men. This mentoring group began a ministry that became known as Radical Mentoring. As the ministry developed, he formulated eleven guiding principles from Jesus’ disciple-making ministry:⁸⁴

- Purpose: “It’s all about the Father and Kingdom building.”
- Selfless endeavor: “Jesus mentored out of obedience to the Father.”
- Group context (not one-on-one): “Jesus new the value of interaction between group members.”
- Handpicked: “Jesus handpicked those He mentored after prayer.”
- Short, defined period of time: “There was a graduation day when His mentees were commissioned and launched.”
- Scripture: “Jesus helped His guys understand and apply God’s Word.”
- Prayer: “He taught the disciples how to pray and prayed with them and for them.”
- Modeling: “Jesus lived out His life in front of His mentees.”
- Taught along the way: “Jesus helped his guys with practical situations.”
- Mutual commitment: “They left their businesses, families, homes... all to follow and learn.”
- Multiplication: “It produced evangelists and disciple-makers. Multiplication was a part of what everyone signed up for, and no one was excluded from that requirement.”

84. Reggie Campbell, *Mentor Like Jesus: His Radical Approach to Building the Church* (Atlanta, GA: RM Press, 2016), E-book, loc 259-322.

Radical Mentoring (RM) offers a framework and excellent website⁸⁵ to support those who want to disciple in a monthly mentoring format. The website facilitates the development of either a nine-month or twelve-month mentoring program at no cost, complete with handouts, schedules, meeting guidelines, and homework assignments. The user can either use the pre-selected topics from RM, or they can select from a list of twenty-two topics and build their own mentoring track. Each month focuses on a different topic. In preparation for the monthly meeting, the participants read the assigned book, prepare a one-page “net out” of the book,⁸⁶ memorize two passages of Scripture, and complete the application exercises which may relate to strengthening their marriage or practicing the theme topic for the month. For a sample outline of a nine-month Radical Mentoring schedule, see Appendix D.

Conclusion

As a college junior, Eric Leong, our Campus Crusade director, gave me a copy of Dawson Trotmans’ *Born to Reproduce*. I remember sitting on my bed late one night and reading the little booklet that challenged me to invest in discipling another man. That night I prayed, “Lord, give me a man to disciple.” Shortly after that, our Campus Crusade group hosted Andre Cole, a Christian illusionist. I invited several guys from my forestry classes, and two attended and prayed to receive Christ. The Lord answered my prayer as I launched a small group to disciple those guys. Throughout the years, I have used a number of different resources to disciple others, yet the biggest key has been the

85. <https://radicalmentoring.com/>

86. A “net out” is not a book report, but rather the main takeaways and applications that an individual gleans from reading the book. In the monthly group gathering, each person shares their net out as part of the discussion on the book.

relationships formed with those I disciple, not the material we study. There are many great discipleship tools that have been developed, and a church would do well to evaluate them and decide their preferred discipleship pathway, but the principles are more important than the material. Dave Ferguson writes, “Disciple multipliers prioritize relationships, not curriculum.”⁸⁷

This chapter has explored seven essential factors (principles) that must be present in our disciple-making ministry in order for it to be considered redemptive: spiritual disciplines, biblical truth, character transformation, relational engagement, ministry experiences, missional living, and multiplication. When these seven essential factors are present in a discipleship experience, the disciple-making outcomes of *being with Jesus*, *becoming like Jesus*, and *doing what Jesus did* become a reality in a disciple’s life. Disciple-making begins small, intentionally investing in a few people. Over time, as the seven essentials are practiced, a disciple-making ministry will grow and may become a movement that potentially impacts millions. It is Jesus’ method of ministry and the call of the church today.

In the following chapter, I will describe several different disciple-making programs that were tested at Venture Christian Church and how we measured the effectiveness of each in relationship to the seven essentials. The focus of the disciple-making programs was to equip followers to become disciplers.

87. Dave Ferguson and Warren Bird, *Hero Maker: Five Essential Practices for Leaders to Multiply Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 116.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

In the previous chapters, I established three primary outcomes of Redemptive Disciple-making as *being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing the things that Jesus did*. I also developed the idea that there are seven essential factors of Redemptive Disciple-making that lead to the three primary outcomes: Engaging in spiritual disciplines, embracing biblical truth that shapes worldview, experiencing transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit, forming loving relationships with others that journey together in spiritual formation, experiencing ministry activities that move the discipleship experience from the head to the heart, missional living that draws others to Christ, and multiplication of disciples.

In this chapter I will describe four different discipleship models that were implemented at Venture Christian Church (VCC) in Los Gatos, California. These discipleship groups were conducted between October 2017 and September 2019, with each group lasting between six and twelve months. The discipleship models that were chosen focused on developing mature believers into disciple-makers, therefore, those who were invited to participate had already demonstrated their commitment to following Jesus through faithful involvement in groups, classes, or mission trips at VCC.

This chapter will also describe the process of measuring the effectiveness of the four discipleship groups using written assessments. The participants of the discipleship groups will give their feedback through three different assessments with questions that focus on the seven essential factors and the participants' progress in their spiritual

formation. The results of these assessments will test our thesis statement, “*A biblical redemptive disciple-making process is an essential tool in the development of redemptive leaders,*” as well as answer the final thesis exploration question posed in Chapter 1: “*What measurable changes resulted from taking a group of people through a redemptive discipleship experience?*”

Discipleship Models

Discipleship Essentials

The first discipleship model tested in this project uses Discipleship Essentials by Greg Ogden. It is a twenty-five-lesson resource that leads people through a process of growth and self-discovery through Bible study, scripture memory, reading, reflection, and discussion in a 90-minute weekly group meeting. The topics in this resource are broken into four main sections: “Growing Up in Christ,” which focuses on developing personal disciplines; “Understanding the Message of Christ,” focusing on core theological concepts; “Becoming Like Christ,” which examines the process of transformation and development of character; and finally “Serving Christ,” which leads the participants into understanding of living their lives to build Christ’s church.¹ The first chapter in Discipleship Essentials is on making disciples with an exegetical study of the Great Commission found in Matthew 28:18-20, and the next to last chapter is on multiplication, with the study focused around 2 Timothy 2:2 where Paul challenges Timothy to pass on the things he learned from Paul to “faithful men who will be able to teach others also.” By beginning and concluding this disciple-making resource with the concepts of making

1. Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials: A Guide to Building Your Life in Christ*, exp. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 5-6.

disciples who will also make disciples, Ogden lays a strong foundation for multiplication in the disciple-making ministry.²

The methodology of Discipleship Essentials is a peer-to-peer learning style, where there is a rotation of group members leading the weekly meetings. According to Ogden, the recommended group size of Discipleship Essentials is three or four.³ In May 2018, I invited eight men to go through Discipleship Essentials, and four of those men agreed to join me. We met weekly on Sunday mornings. In order to meet, we required at least three of us to be available. As a result, we met on average three times per month and completed working through the material in eight months. The ages of the participants range from fifty-two to sixty-six years old. The ethnicities of the four participants included one Hispanic, one Asian, and two Caucasians. A second discipleship group using Discipleship Essentials was formed at the same time and included five Caucasians, with ages ranging from fifty-three to sixty-two years old. Both groups are included in the assessments and evaluation of the effectiveness of Discipleship Essentials as a discipleship tool.

Followers Made

The second discipleship model that I will evaluate was developed at Westside Family Church in Kansas City and has now grown into its own ministry called Disciples Made.⁴ This model focuses more on habits and outcomes instead of content. Over the past nine years, they have developed four discipleship processes, but for the sake of this

2. See Appendix C for an outline of the Discipleship Essentials material.

3. Ogden, Discipleship Essentials, 10.

4. <https://disciplesmade.com>, accessed August 16, 2019.

project, I will focus only on the first one, Followers Made (FM). FM is a six-month journey of discipleship that includes reading, online journaling, meeting weekly, and engaging in other practices to grow closer to Jesus and to develop a missional focus in life.⁵ A FM group consists of six to twelve participants who meet in triads for the first 30 minutes of the weekly meeting, then as a larger group for the balance of the time together.

The six men who joined the FM group were from a group of eighteen table leaders from our Spring 2019 Man to Man men's ministry who were invited to participate in this six-month discipleship group. Their ages range from thirty-eight to sixty-three, and their ethnicities include one Asian, one Dutch, and four Caucasians.

Jesus as Mentor

The third discipleship model evaluated was developed by Bonnie Brooks Bjarin and is called Jesus as Mentor (JAM). Bonnie formulated this discipleship model over the past fifteen years through discipling women in the Bay Area of California. In the past few years, the JAM material has been written and formulated into a discipleship program that has been implemented in the Women's Ministry at Venture Christian Church.⁶ She has led three groups of women through this twelve-month discipleship experience, but for the purpose of this study I will assess those who participated in the 2018-2019 JAM groups. JAM is a monthly discipleship gathering, with homework assignments to complete between meetings. However, rather than meeting for twelve months straight, Bonnie

5. See Appendix D for an outline of the material covered in Followers Made.

6. Bonnie Brooks Bjarin, *Jesus as Mentor: Listen to Him, Learn from Him, Walk with Him*, (San Jose, CA: Jewel Ministry Publishing, 2016).

holds the monthly gatherings from October through March. They work through the first half of JAM in one year, then go through the second half of the book the second year. Bonnie leads these two groups simultaneously by meeting on two different Saturdays each month.

The format of the monthly JAM discipleship group time includes twenty to thirty minutes of teaching from Bonnie followed by a small group time around tables with a mentor leader and participants. For some of the sessions, the leader shows a ten to fifteen-minute illustration video on the topic of the month. Bonnie states that her target table group size is five people, with one leader and four participants.⁷ In the past year, twelve women completed the JAM year two training and will be included in the assessments and evaluation. The ages of these participants range from thirty-three to seventy-eight and include two Asians and ten Caucasians.

The goal of JAM is to help participants learn the skills necessary to grow in their relationship with God, with Jesus, and the Holy Spirit as their primary mentor, leading them to discover truth and apply it to their lives in their personal times of reading, reflecting, journaling, and prayer. Bonnie teaches four strategic shifts in Jesus as Mentor: “From intellectual belief to deep relationship with the living God; from knowing about Scripture to having God open the Word and breathe life into it; from looking at the physical world to seeing the invisible, spiritual realm more clearly; and from unbelief to strong unshakeable faith.”^{8 9}

7. Personal Interview with Bonnie Brooks Bjarin, August 14, 2019, Los Gatos, CA.

8. Email content from Bonnie Brooks Bjarin, August 6, 2019.

9. See Appendix E for the outline of JAM.

Radical Mentoring

The final model that I will evaluate is Radical Mentoring (RM), developed by Reggie Campbell.¹⁰ It is structured differently than most discipleship programs in that it consists of an initial two-day retreat where participants share their life stories and begin to grow deep in relationship from the beginning of their discipleship journey, and then in the following months, the gatherings are monthly, lasting for three hours each month. The final session together is another two-day retreat where the participants discuss their growth and progress over the previous months and map out a strategy to continue growing and investing into the lives of others through mentoring and discipleship. RM can be a nine-month or twelve-month process and is highly customizable with topics and length of program. Monthly topics include things like prayer, godly character, marriage, theology, church, and more.¹¹

In preparation of each monthly meeting, the participants read a book and write a one-page summary of that book to bring to the meeting and discuss with the others in the group. They also memorize scripture to recite with each other at the monthly meeting. In between meetings, there is a growth assignment that the men carry out to put into practice what they are learning. In addition, they pair up with a different man each month to meet one-on-one to discuss their progress, encourage each other, build deeper relationships, and pray for each other. Each month a different topic is addressed in order to bring growth and development into the participant's life. The ideal size of a RM group is four to eight people.

10. <https://radicalmentoring.com>, accessed August 16, 2019.

11. See Appendix F for a sample Radical Mentoring 9-month program.

The men that I invited to participate in the RM group included men from two different Life Groups that I had either led or been a participant in, from a prayer group, from a mission trip that my wife and I led in October 2018, and from our men's leadership team. Of the fourteen men invited into the group, seven accepted the challenge and have participated in the RM group. The ages of the men in this group range from thirty-nine to fifty-nine years old. Their ethnicities include one Egyptian, one Indian, one Vietnamese, and four Caucasians.

Assessments

Two of the three assessments used for this project are accessed from Gloo, a growth market network that focuses on supporting churches with data analytics, assessments, and other tools in order that they may better support their "people and community through their unique growth journeys."¹² Gloo owns the data and assessments from the REVEAL study, and has built several assessments out of the REVEAL questions, as well as providing additional assessments from the American Bible Society and the Christian Life Profile. The data collected by Gloo is secure and anonymous, so the identity of participants will be kept confidential.

Believe Checkup

The first Gloo assessment that I will be using is the Believe Checkup, which includes questions from Randy Frazee's Christian Life Profile, and the REVEAL study. The sixty-six questions measure key beliefs, practices and virtues that a Jesus follower will exhibit. Many of the factors measured in this assessment coincide with the seven

12. Gloo, "Our Vision," <https://www.gloo.us/vision>, accessed August 16, 2019.

essential factors of Redemptive Disciple-making, as well as bringing clarity to where a person is on their spiritual journey in relation to the REVEAL Spiritual Continuum.¹³ The following charts show examples of the data collected from the Believe Checkup:

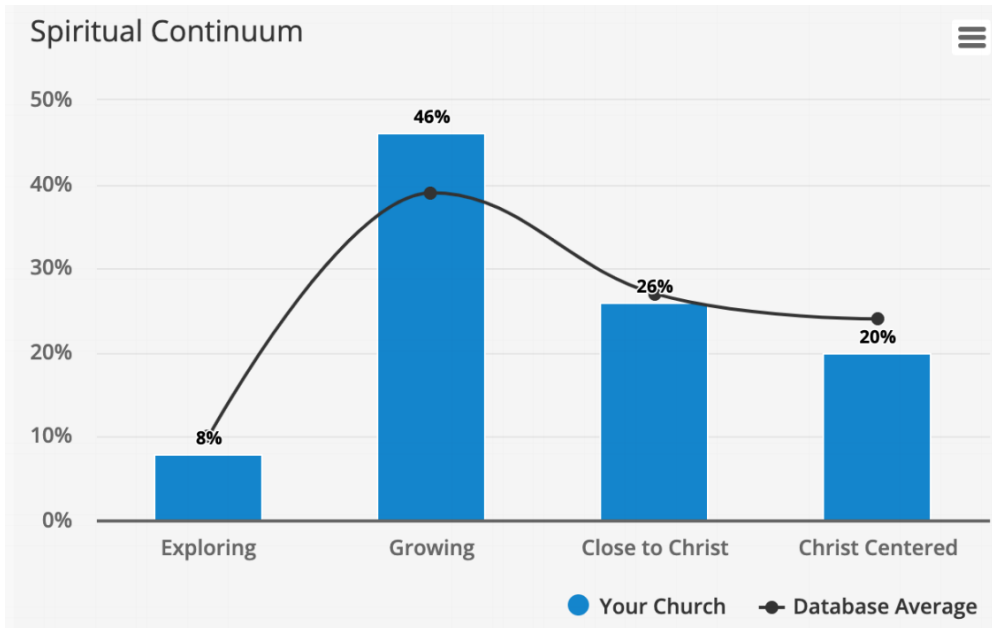


Figure 4-1. Sample Believe Checkup Spiritual Continuum

13. See Appendix J for the Believe Checkup Assessment questions.

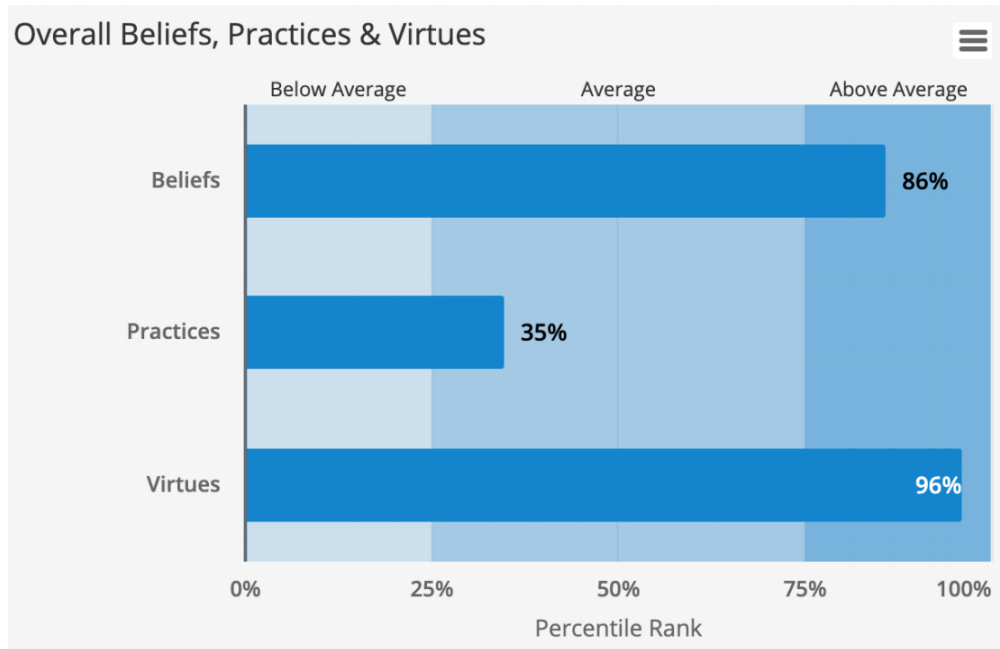


Figure 4-2. Sample Believe Checkup Overview

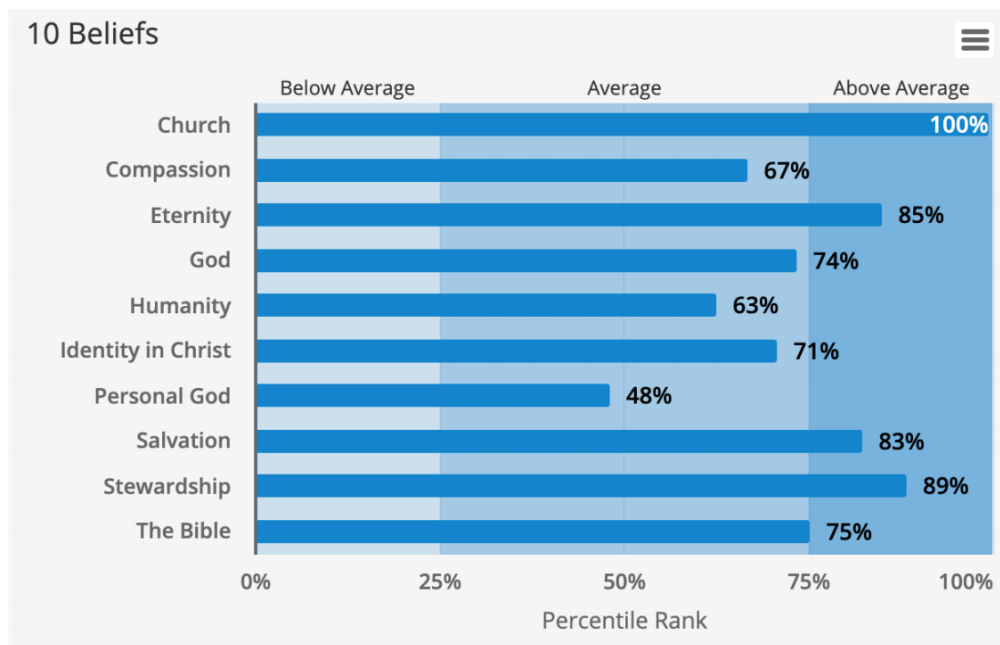


Figure 4-3. Sample Believe Checkup Key Beliefs

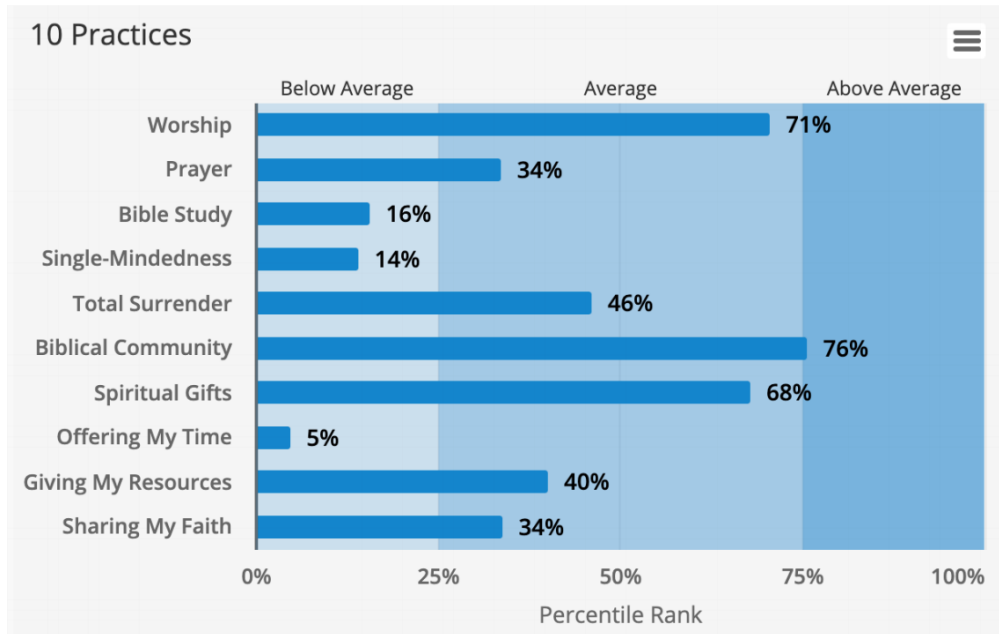


Figure 4-4. Sample Believe Checkup Key Practices

Scripture Engagement

The second Gloo assessment measures how well people interact with their Bible and is called the Scripture Engagement Survey, produced by the American Bible Society. Carolyn Wildermuth from American Bible Society writes: “Engaging with Scripture is not just about reading the Bible so we can check off a box on our task list. It’s about seeking God in the Bible, so that we can connect with God and allow his Word to permeate our entire being—our thoughts, actions, and desires.”¹⁴ In addition to the frequency of engagement with the Bible, this survey measures how the Bible influences their choices, relationship with God and with other people. This short assessment includes fourteen questions and takes two to five minutes to complete. As one of the

14. Carolyn Wildermuth, “What Difference Does Scripture Engagement Make?” in American Bible Society News, February 26, 2019. <http://news.americanbible.org/blog/entry/bible-engagement-leadership/what-difference-does-scripture-engagement-make>, accessed September 7, 2019.

seven essential factors of Redemptive Disciple-making, this survey will help to measure the level of and impact from personal engagement with the Bible.¹⁵ Survey results from Gloo include the following charts:

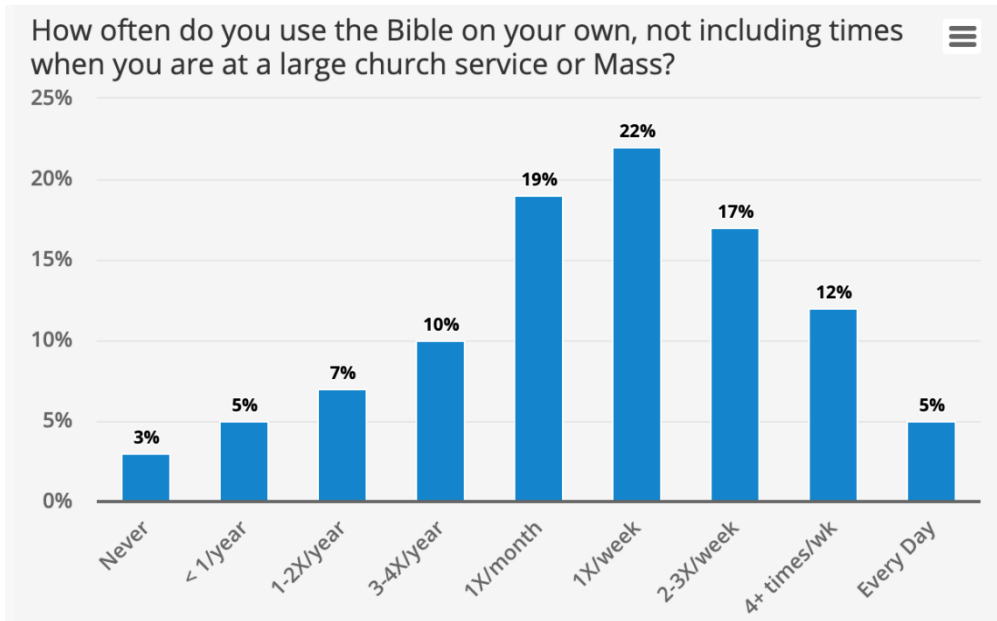


Figure 4-5. Sample Scripture Engagement Frequency

15. See Appendix K for the Scripture Engagement Assessment questions.

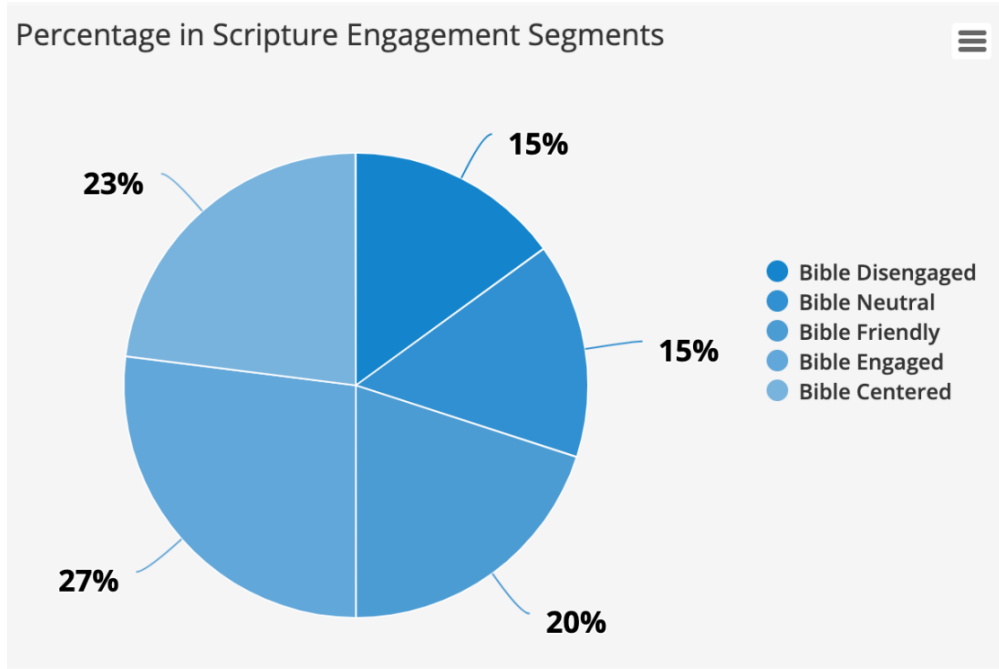


Figure 4-6. Sample Scripture Engagement by Segment

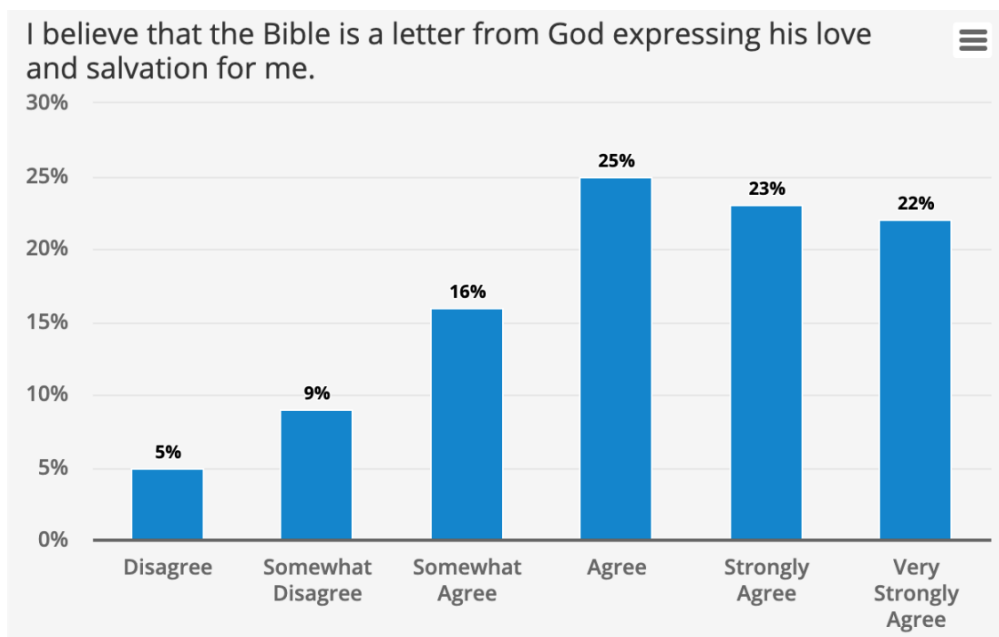


Figure 4-7. Sample Scripture Engagement Love from God

Additional Questions

In order to fully assess both the seven essential factors of Redemptive Disciple-making and the overall effectiveness of each discipleship program, I will add fourteen additional questions. While Gloo allows for up to ten custom questions to be added to the existing assessments, the platform only allows multiple choice questions, and for the purpose of this project, I include three open-ended questions. Because of this limitation in Gloo, I will use Google Forms for the fourteen custom questions. See Appendix L for these additional questions.

Conclusion

While there are many discipleship programs and much curriculum available for disciple-making, the scope of this project is to measure the effectiveness of four different discipleship programs in developing redemptive disciples who are growing to be redemptive leaders. In the following chapter, I will evaluate the results of the assessments, comparing the different programs, and making recommendations for future development of discipleship programs that lead a person through the seven essential factors of Redemptive Disciple-making so that people experience the three primary outcomes of Redemptive Disciple-making: *being with Jesus*, *becoming like Jesus*, and *doing the things that Jesus did*.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter compares the results of assessments conducted with the participants of four different disciple-making programs at Venture Christian Church. The purpose of the assessments was to provide data to evaluate the effectiveness of these programs in developing Redemptive Disciple-makers in terms of the three outcomes: *being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing the things that Jesus did*; and the seven essential factors of Redemptive Disciple-making: Engaging in spiritual disciplines, embracing biblical truth that shapes worldview, experiencing transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit, forming loving relationships with others that journey together in spiritual formation, experiencing ministry activities that move the discipleship experience from the head to the heart, missional living that draws others to Christ, and multiplication of disciples. See Appendixes J-L for the statements and questions asked in the three assessments.

Thirty-four participants were invited to participate in the assessments, and twenty-seven returned all the assessments, a participation rate of 79.4%. From the two Discipleship Essentials (DE) groups, eight of nine men participated in the assessments (88.9%). From the Followers Made (FM) group, five of six men participated in the assessments (83.3%). From Jesus as Mentor (JAM), seven of twelve women participated in the assessments (58.3%). From the Radical Mentoring (RM) group, seven of seven men participated in the assessments (100%).

Assessment Results and Analysis

Believe Checkup

The Believe Checkup (see Appendix J) measured the spiritual maturity of participants based on the REVEAL Spiritual Continuum, as well as measuring ten beliefs, ten practices, and ten virtues. As people mature in their faith, the scores on their beliefs, practices, and virtues should increase.

Spiritual Maturity

According to the Believe Checkup, the spiritual maturity of the participants in the four discipleship programs vary, ranging from Growing in Christ to Christ-Centered. The Gloo website describes the three stages of a believer on the Spiritual Continuum as follows: One who is Growing in Christ would say, “I believe in Jesus and am working on what it means to get to know him.” Someone who is Close to Christ would say, “I feel really close to Christ and depend on him for guidance.” The Christ-Centered individual would describe themselves as, “My relationship with Jesus is the most important relationship in my life. It guides everything I do.”¹

Women from the JAM group demonstrated the highest levels of maturity with six of the seven in the Close to Christ or Christ-Centered categories. The Followers Made group had the highest number of participants describing themselves as Growing in Christ, with three of the five responding in this category. The following graph shows a comparison of the level of spiritual maturity of the participants in each of the groups, based on the spiritual continuum responses from the Believe Checkup:

1. Gloo, “Assessments Glossary of Terms,” <https://insights.gloo.support/hc/en-us/articles/360024645534-Assessments-Glossary-Of-Terms>, accessed September 6, 2019.

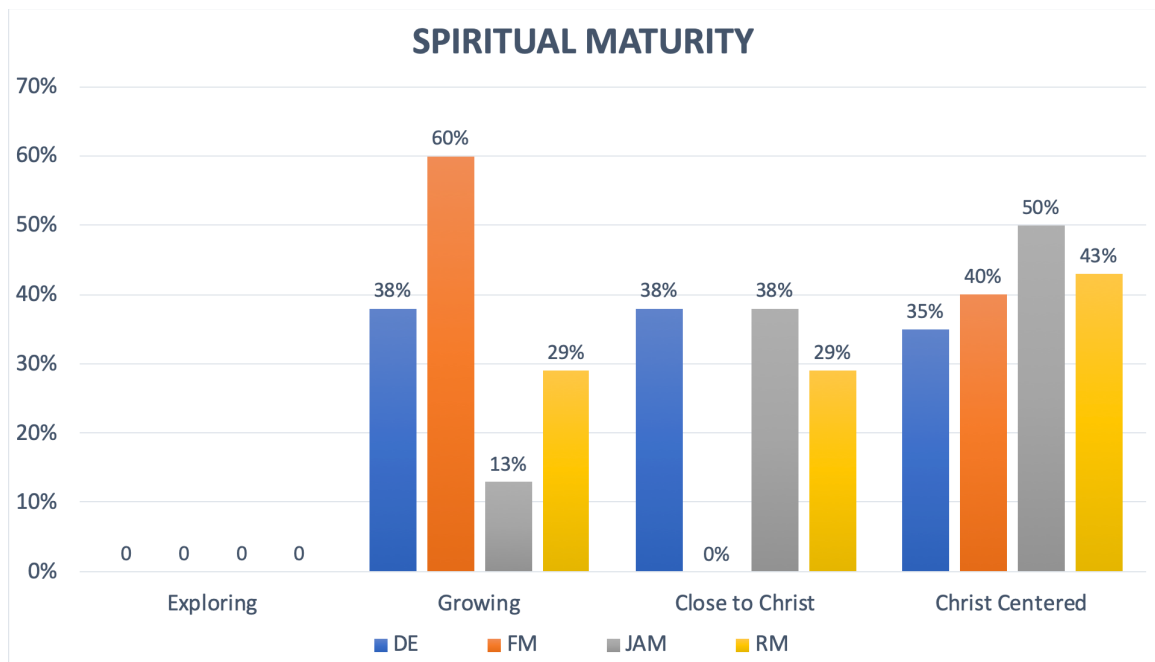


Figure 5-1. Believe Spiritual Continuum Comparison

Overall Beliefs, Practices, and Virtues

All of the discipleship groups demonstrated above average score in beliefs, practices, and virtues. Comparing the overall scores with the level of maturity, there is a correlation between the higher Spiritual Continuum scores for JAM and RM and their overall scores for beliefs, practices, and virtues. The following charts give the overall summary of results for the Believe Checkup by discipleship program:

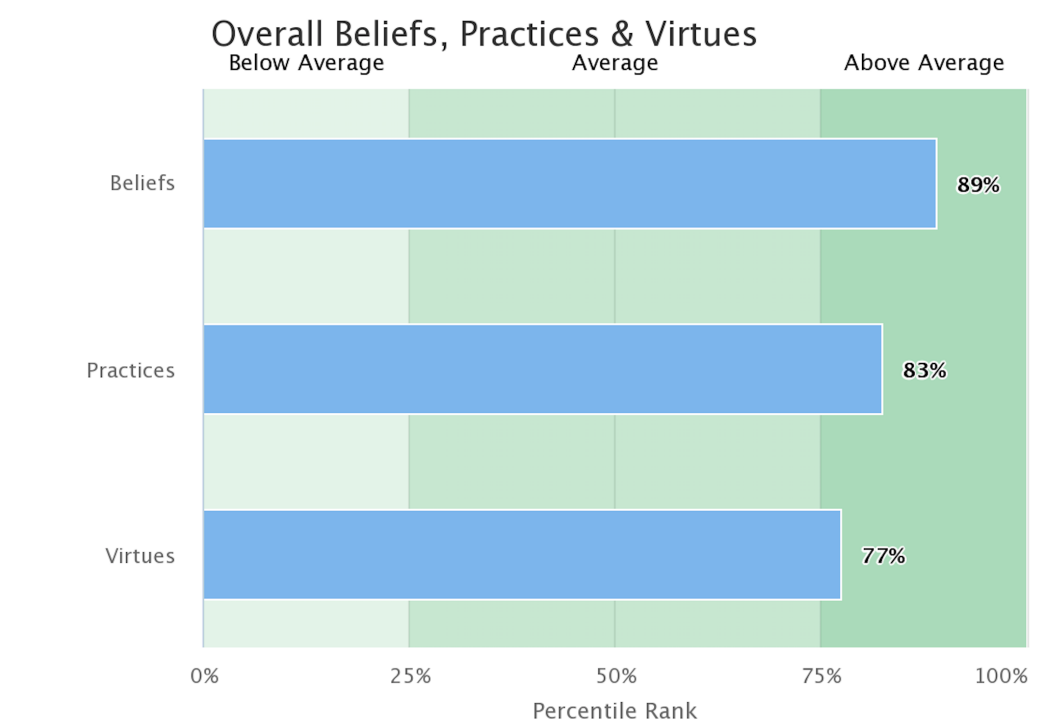


Figure 5-2. Discipleship Essentials, Overall Scores for Believe Checkup

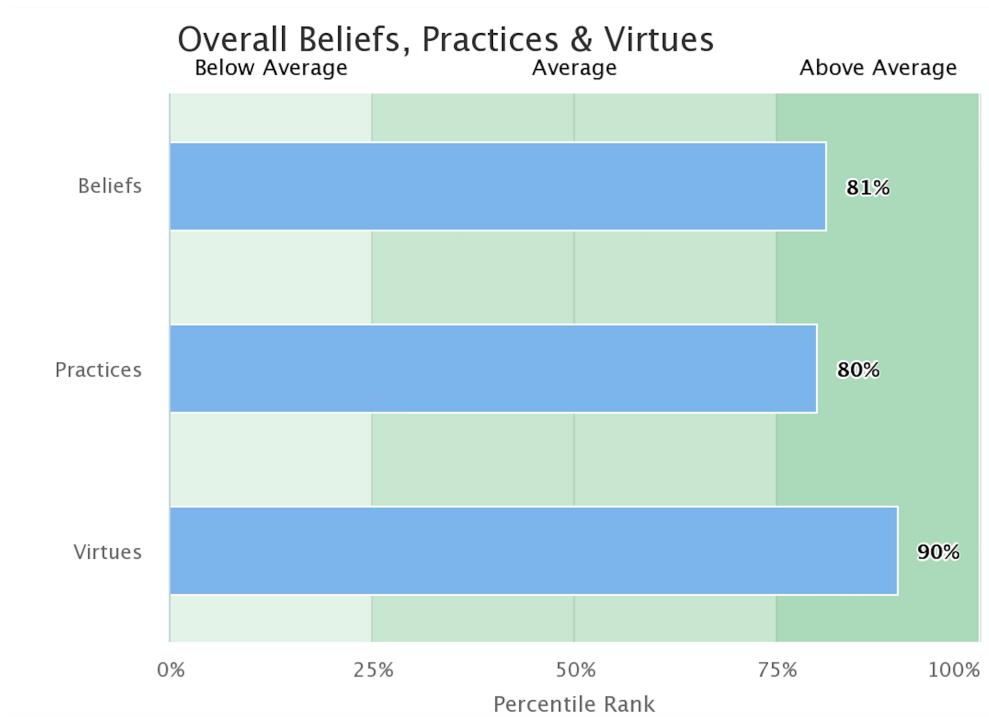


Figure 5-3. Followers Made, Overall Scores for Believe Checkup

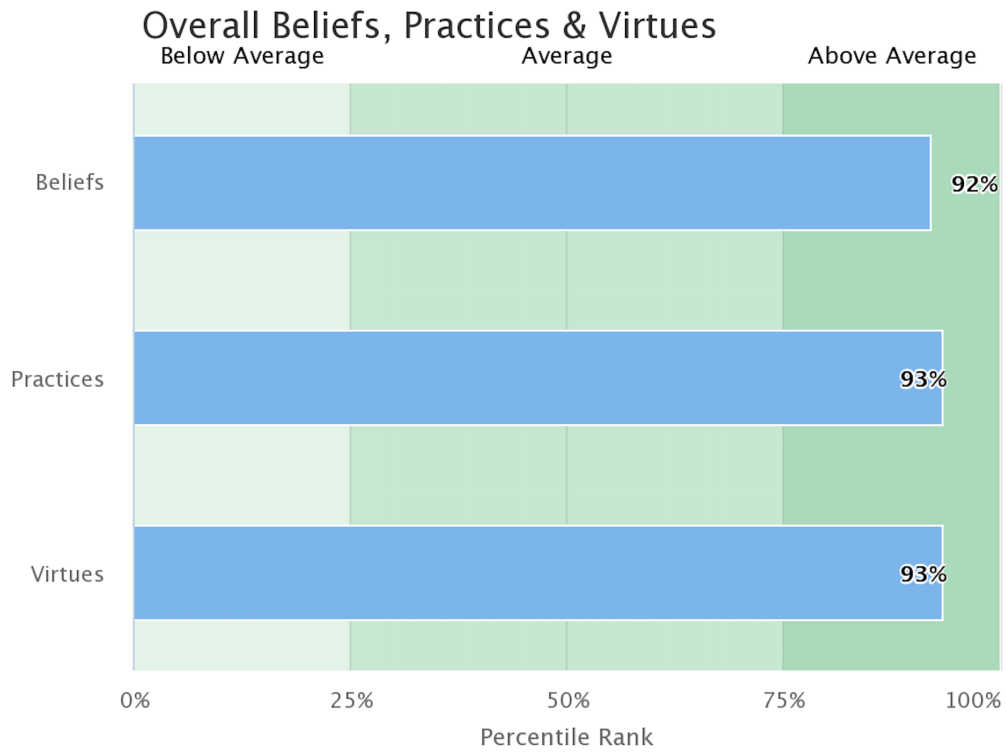


Figure 5-4. Jesus as Mentor, Overall Scores for Believe Checkup

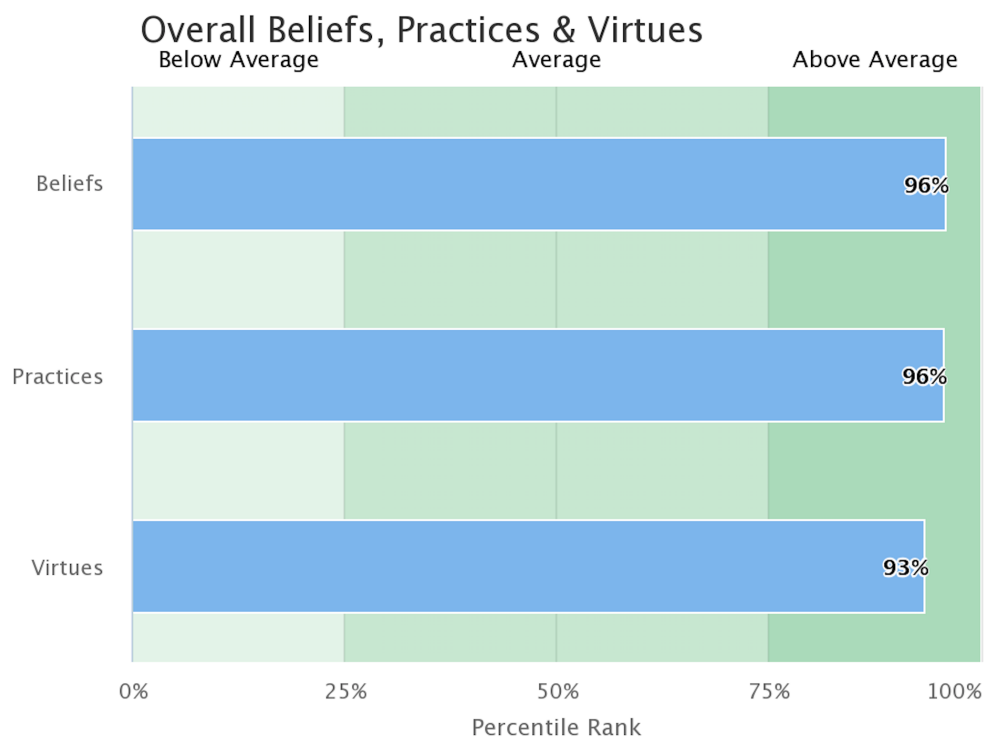


Figure 5-5. Radical Mentoring, Overall Scores for Believe Checkup

Ten Beliefs

For Radical Mentoring and Jesus as Mentor, all the Beliefs scores were in the above average category. Discipleship Essentials had one of the Beliefs (Compassion) in the average category, and the others were above average. Followers Made had three of the Beliefs (Compassion, Humanity, and Personal God) in the average category, and the remainder of the beliefs were above average. According to Gloo, the Ten Beliefs are

Core biblical truths foundational to the Christian faith. Understanding and embracing these Beliefs is key to following Jesus. The Beliefs measured include the teaching around the Trinity, Salvation by Grace, and the Authority of Scripture, as well as the ideas of a Personal God and finding one's Identity in Christ. Past research has found these... beliefs to move as one matures in Christ.²

The following charts show the assessment results for the Ten Beliefs for each discipleship program:

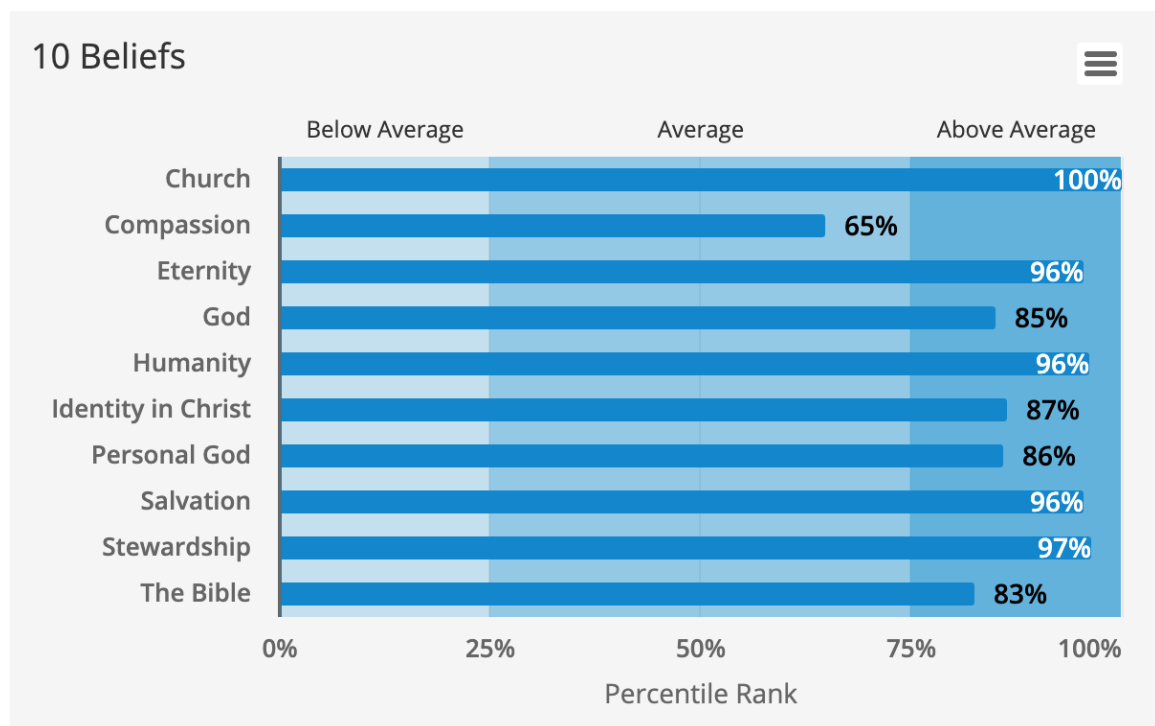


Figure 5-6. Discipleship Essentials, 10 Beliefs from Believe Checkup

2. Descriptions emailed from Jeff Caliguire, Gloo Support Team, September 6, 2019.

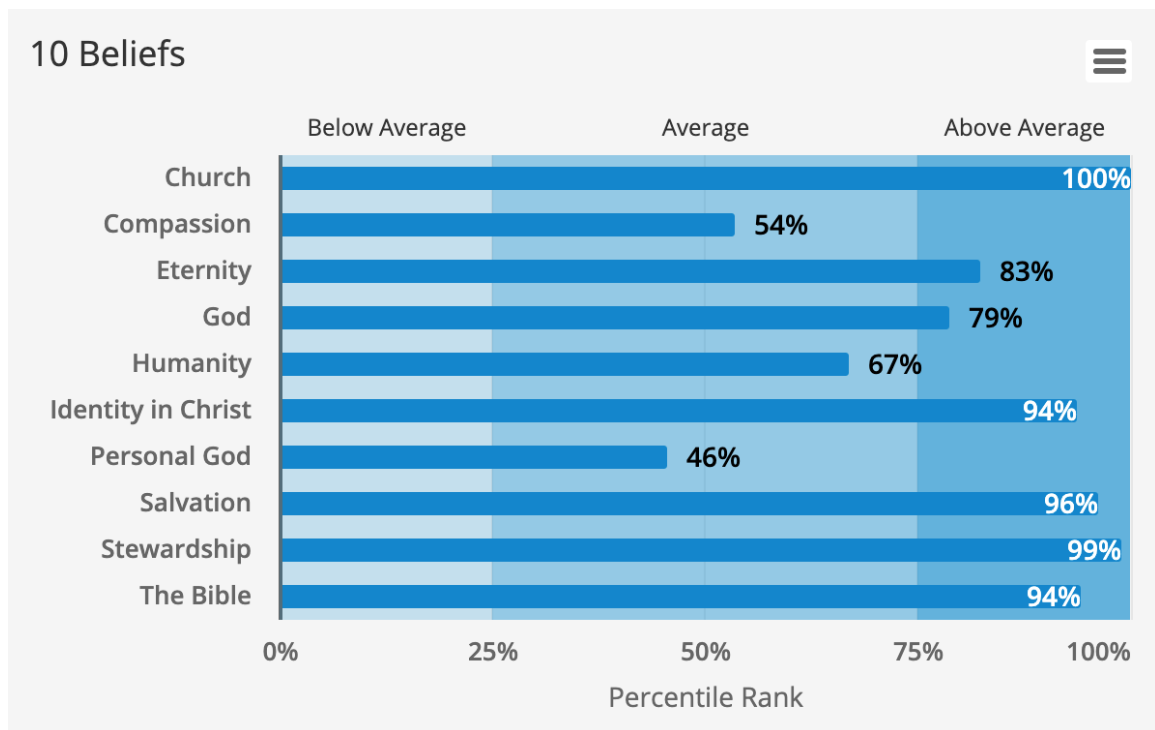


Figure 5-7. Followers Made, 10 Beliefs from Believe Checkup

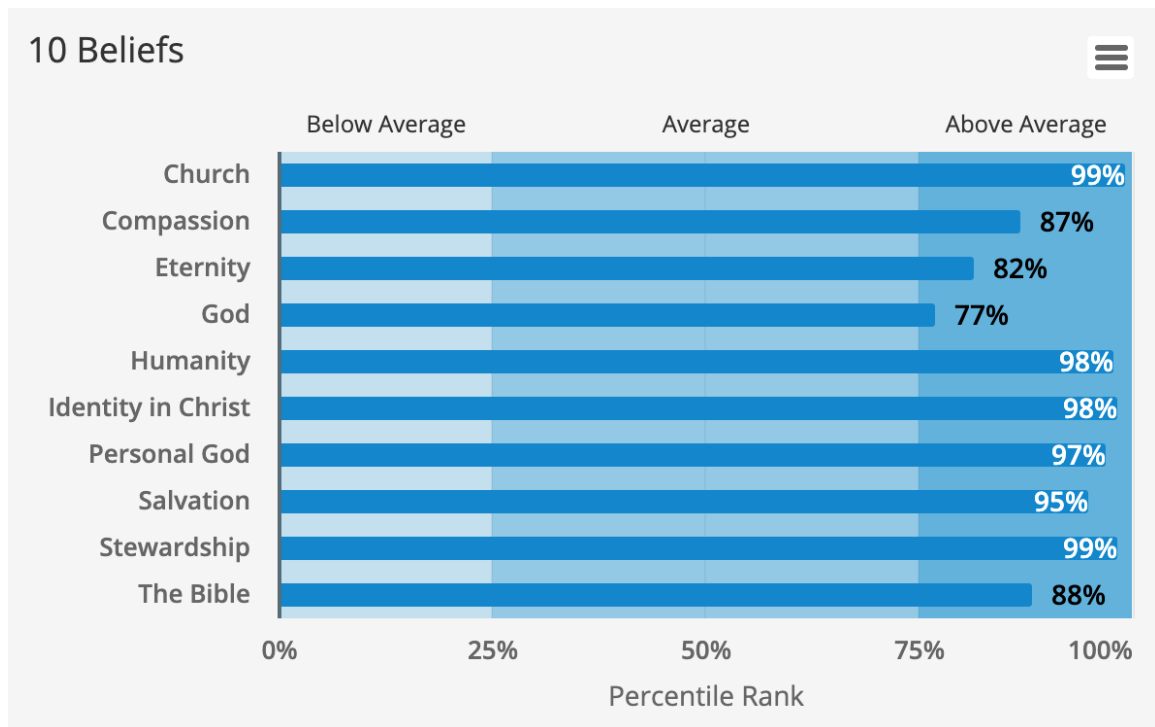


Figure 5-8. Jesus as Mentor, 10 Beliefs from Believe Checkup

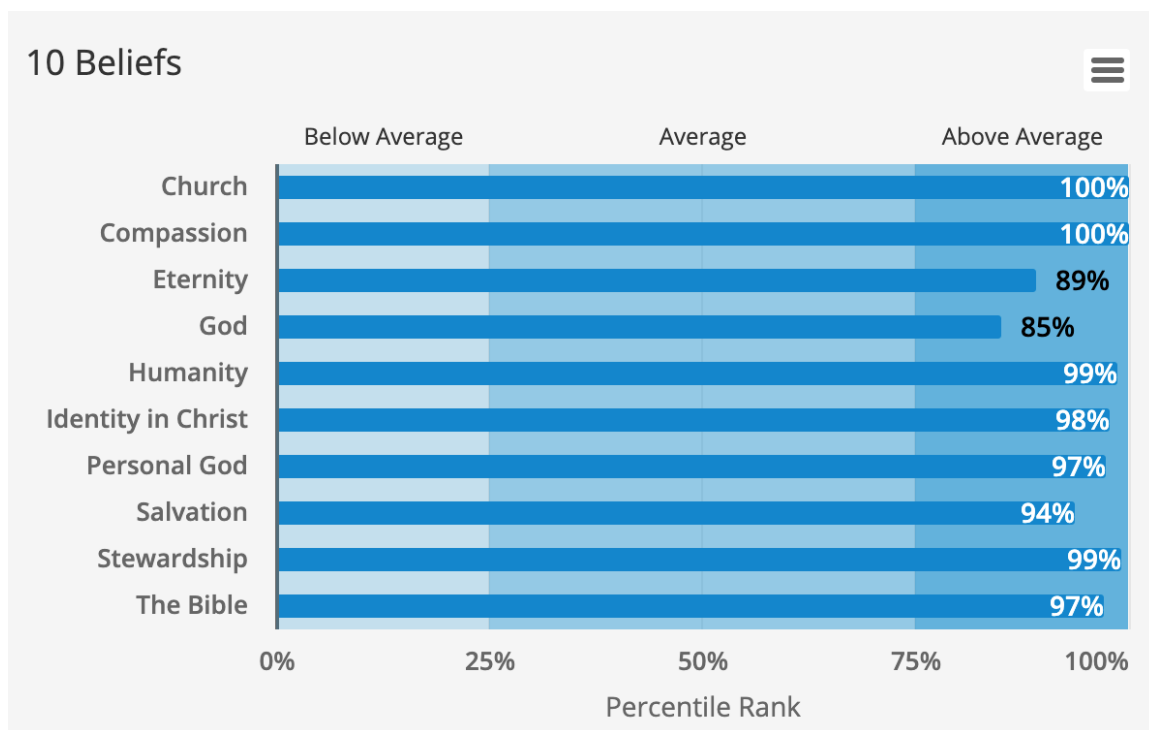


Figure 5-9. Radical Mentoring, 10 Beliefs from Believe Checkup

Ten Practices

Gloo describes the Ten Practices as

Foundational Christian behavior. Engaging these Practices moves a belief from your mind to your heart where it is truly embraced and lived out. The personal spiritual Practices that most reliably fuel an individual's spiritual growth include Bible Study, Worship, Prayer, Biblical Community, and a Single-Mindedness that reflects a desire for Christ to be first in one's life.³

A key component of Redemptive Disciple-making involves engagement and growth in all ten of these Christian behaviors. As with the Ten Beliefs, RM and JAM scored with all of their Practices in the above average range. The FM group had rather low scores in Single-Mindedness ("a desire for Christ to be first in one's life"¹⁹⁷) and Prayer. The lowest score for the DE group was also in Single-Mindedness, but at 65%

3. Jeff Caliguire, September 6, 2019.

was to the right side of the average range. The DE group had five Practices that were in the average range, but like Single-Mindedness, they were to the right side of the average range, close to the above average range. The following charts show the assessment results for the Ten Practices for each of the discipleship programs:

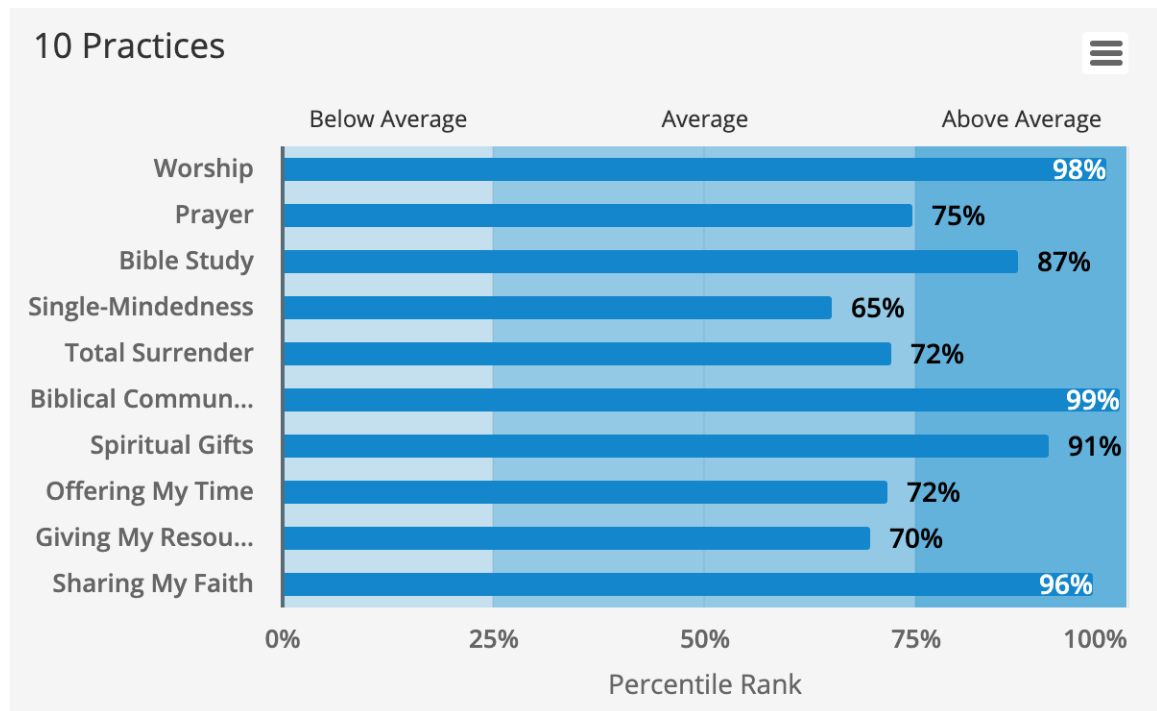


Figure 5-10. Discipleship Essentials, 10 Practices from Believe Checkup

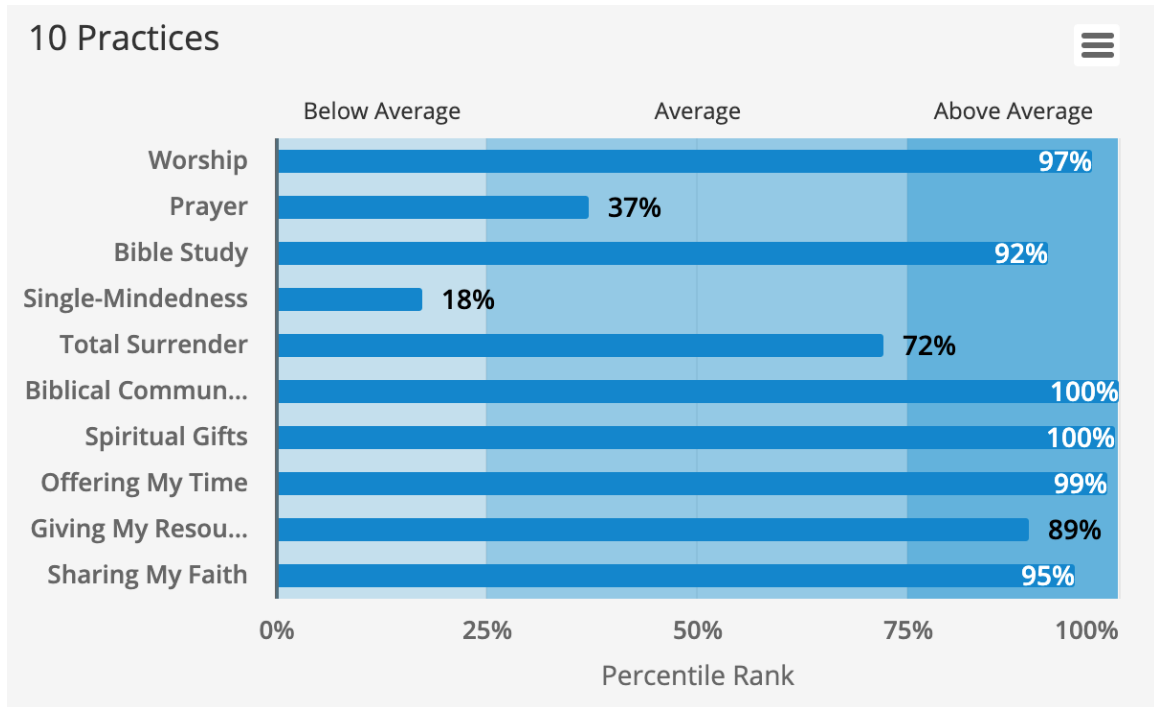


Figure 5-11. Followers Made, 10 Practices from Believe Checkup

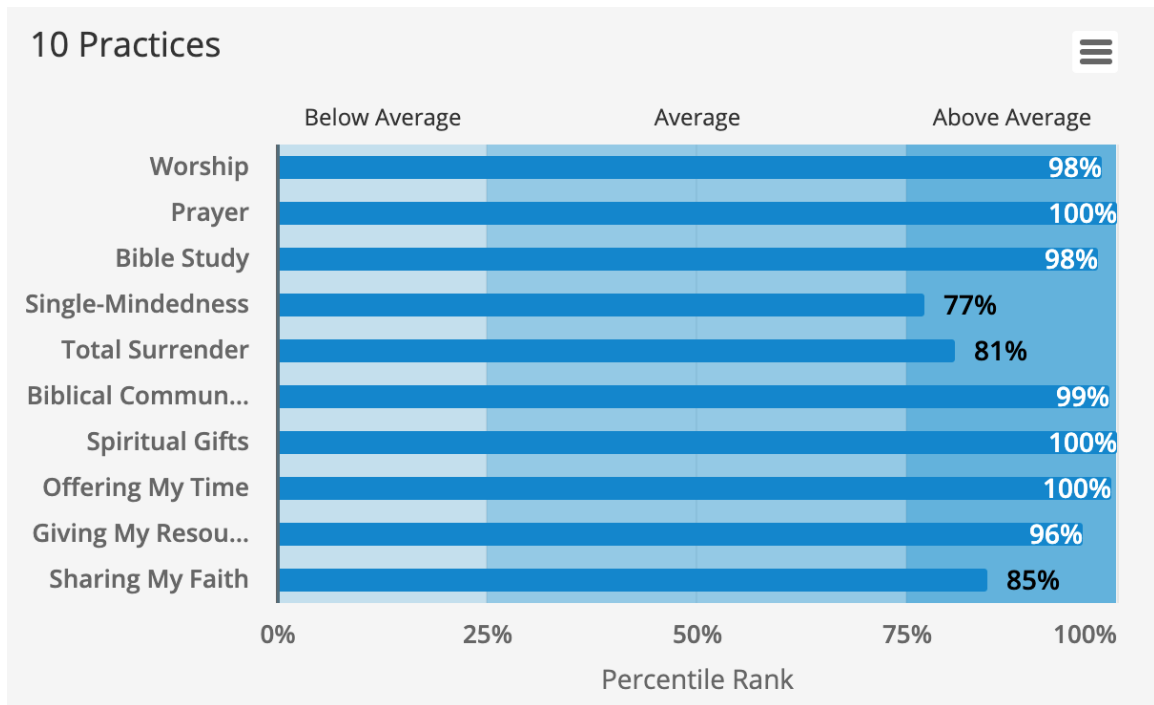


Figure 5-12. Jesus as Mentor, 10 Practices from Believe Checkup

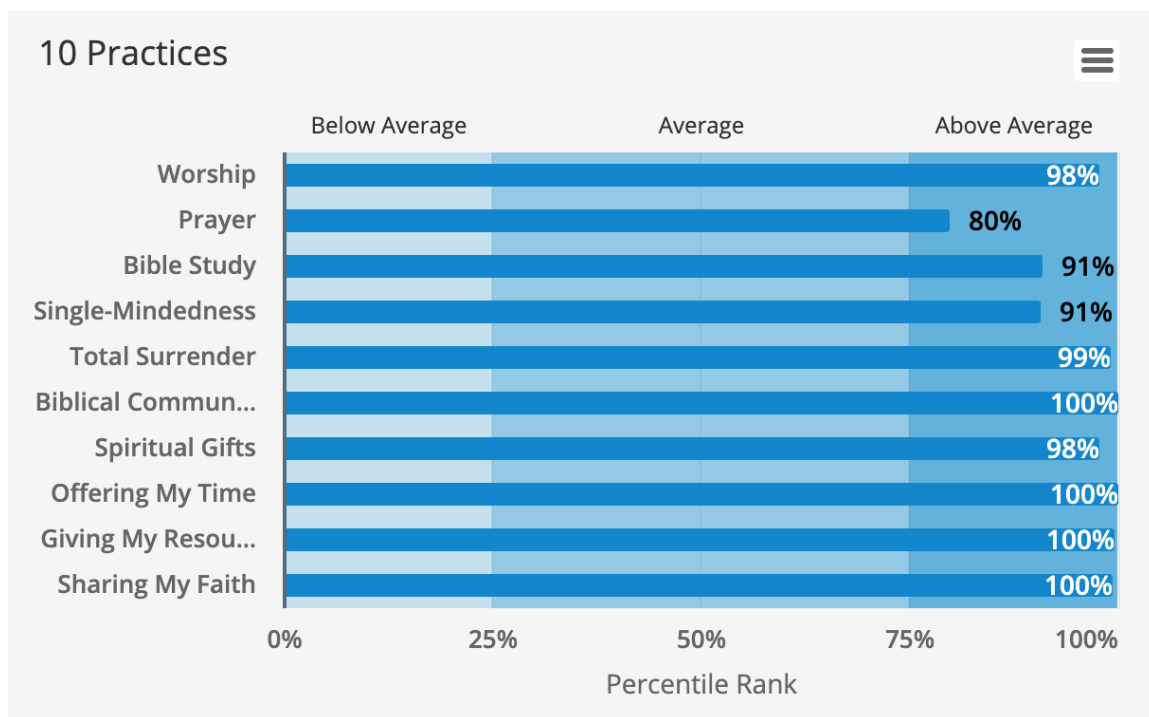


Figure 5-13. Radical Mentoring, 10 Practices from Believe Checkup

Ten Virtues

The Ten Virtues are described as, “Qualities that demonstrate the thoughts, attitudes, and actions of one abiding in Christ. These are Christ-like ‘fruits’ that reveal who you are becoming. Another name for Virtues is Fruit of the Spirit... These virtues are often the outcome of solid beliefs and practices taking hold in one’s life.”⁴ One surprising discovery from the Virtues results was the wide difference between the men’s groups and the women’s group in the score for the “Love” Virtue category. The average “Love” score for the men was 25.3%, while for the women it was 81%. The DE and FM groups scored in the below average range (13% and 16% respectively), and the RM group scored in the average range (47%). The JAM women’s discipleship group scored

4. Jeff Caliguire, September 6, 2019.

above average in the same category (81%). Three of the groups had nine out of ten of the virtues above average, while only the DE groups had less with six of the ten virtues in the above average range, three in the average range, and one in the below average range. The charts below show the Ten Virtues scores by discipleship program:

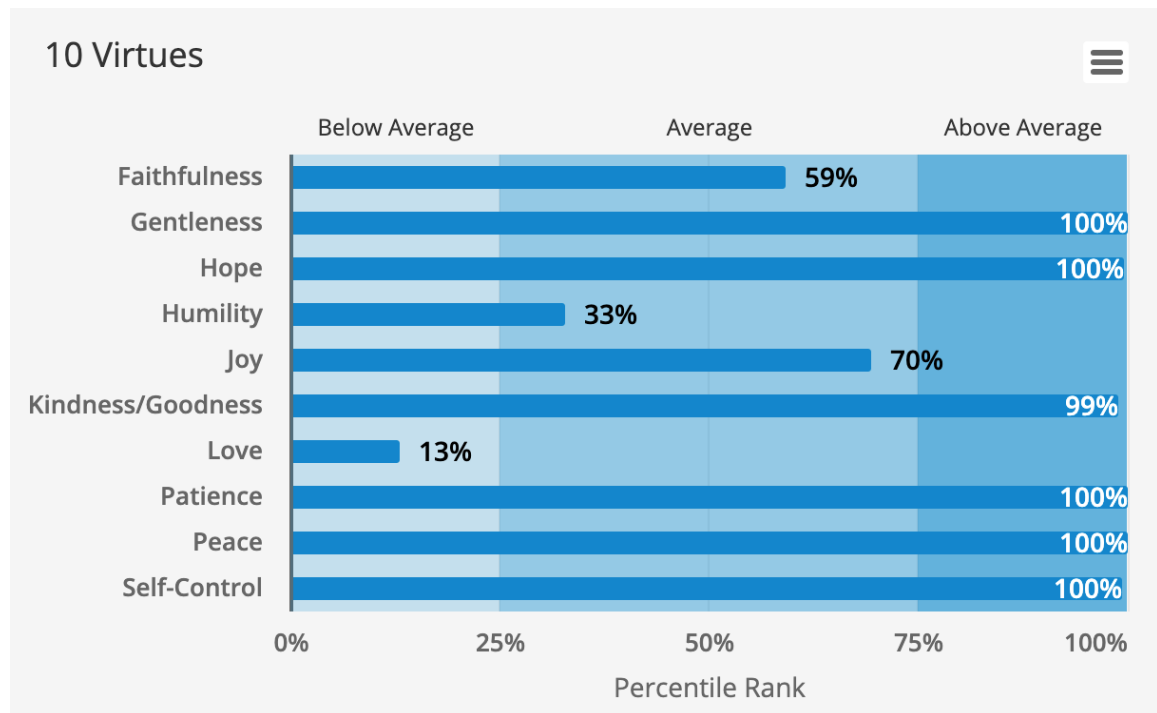


Figure 5-14. Discipleship Essentials, 10 Virtues from Believe Checkup

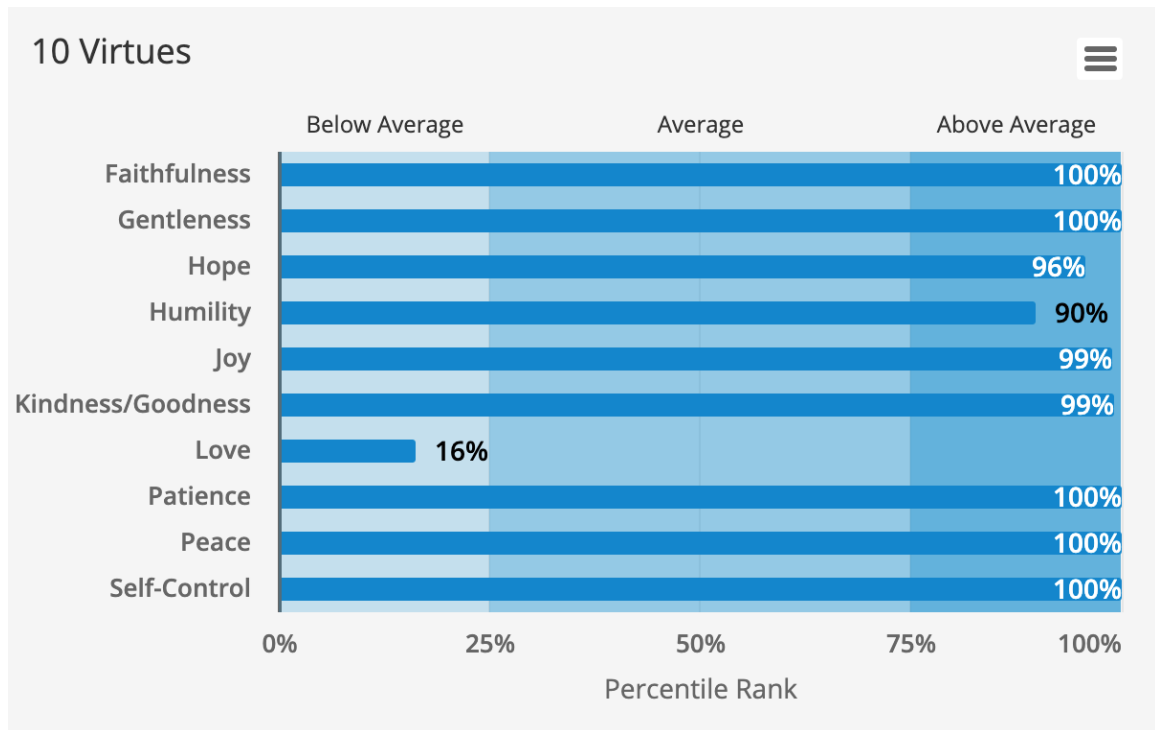


Figure 5-15. Followers Made, 10 Virtues from Believe Checkup

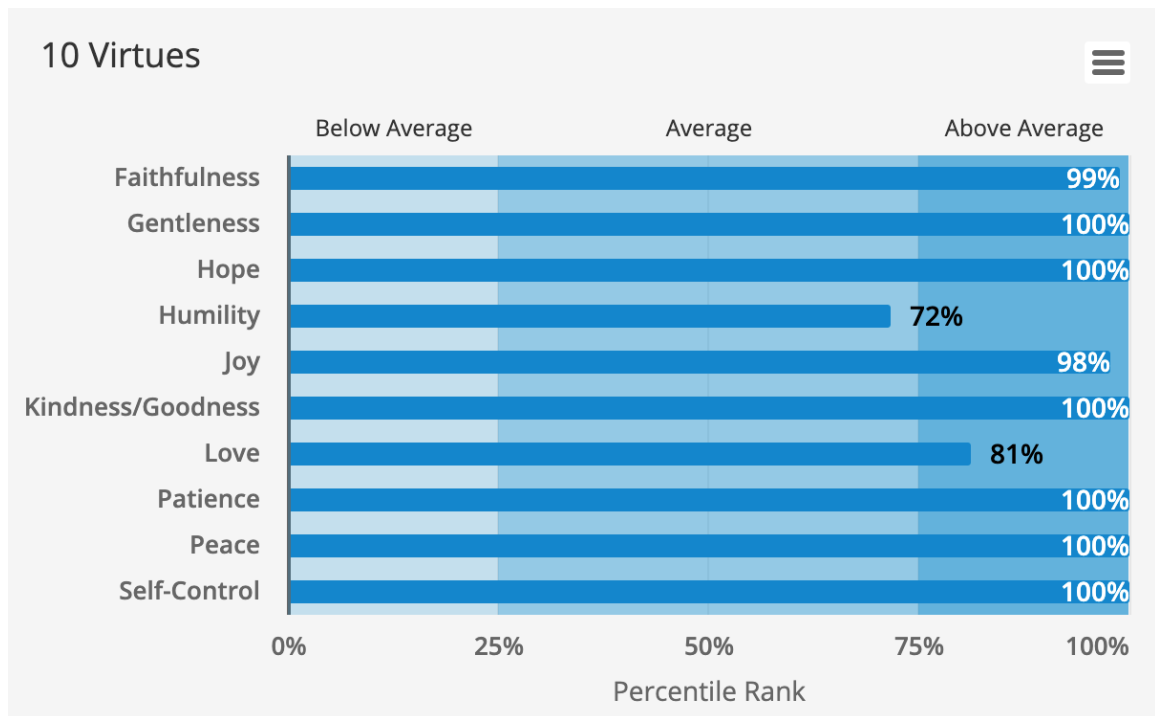


Figure 5-16. Jesus as Mentor, 10 Virtues from Believe Checkup

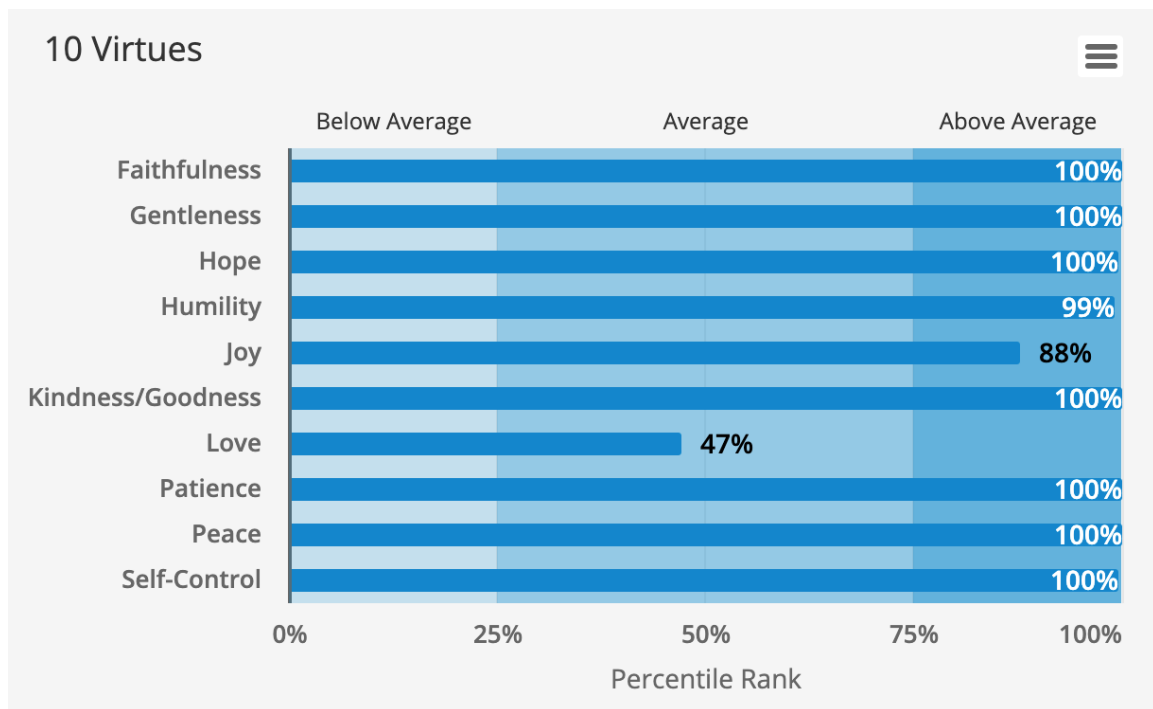


Figure 5-17. Radical Mentoring, 10 Virtues from Believe Checkup

The value of the use of the Believe Checkup assessment is to give a person a snapshot of where they are in their spiritual journey and to identify potential areas in which to develop. It is an assessment that can be repeated periodically and would provide evidence of progress in one's spiritual journey. The review of the Believe Checkup results has shown that two of the groups' participants are further along on their Spiritual Continuum, and have corresponding higher scores in their Beliefs, Practices, and Virtues. However, all of the groups had high scores in the overall comparison of these areas, and only demonstrated a few areas of needed growth.

Redemptive Disciple-making Assessment

The Redemptive Disciple-making Assessment provides further insights into the degree of impact that each of the discipleship programs had in the lives of the participants. The first eleven statements asked for a response based on a scale of 1 to 5,

with 1 representing “Not at all true of me” and 5 representing “Very true of me.” The last three questions provided opportunity for open-ended response by the participants. Three of the multiple-choice statements focused on disciple-making, two on missional living, three on growth in spiritual disciplines and intimacy with God, one on serving using spiritual gifts, and two on the usage or recommendation of their discipleship program. The following section compares the four discipleship programs grouped together by statement categories and using a 1 to 5 scale to show the response by group: 1 = “Not at all true of me,” while 5 = “Very true of me.”

Disciple-making Statements

The first group of statements relates to being a disciple and engaging in discipling other people. The following chart shows the disciple-making responses to the statements, grouped by discipleship program:

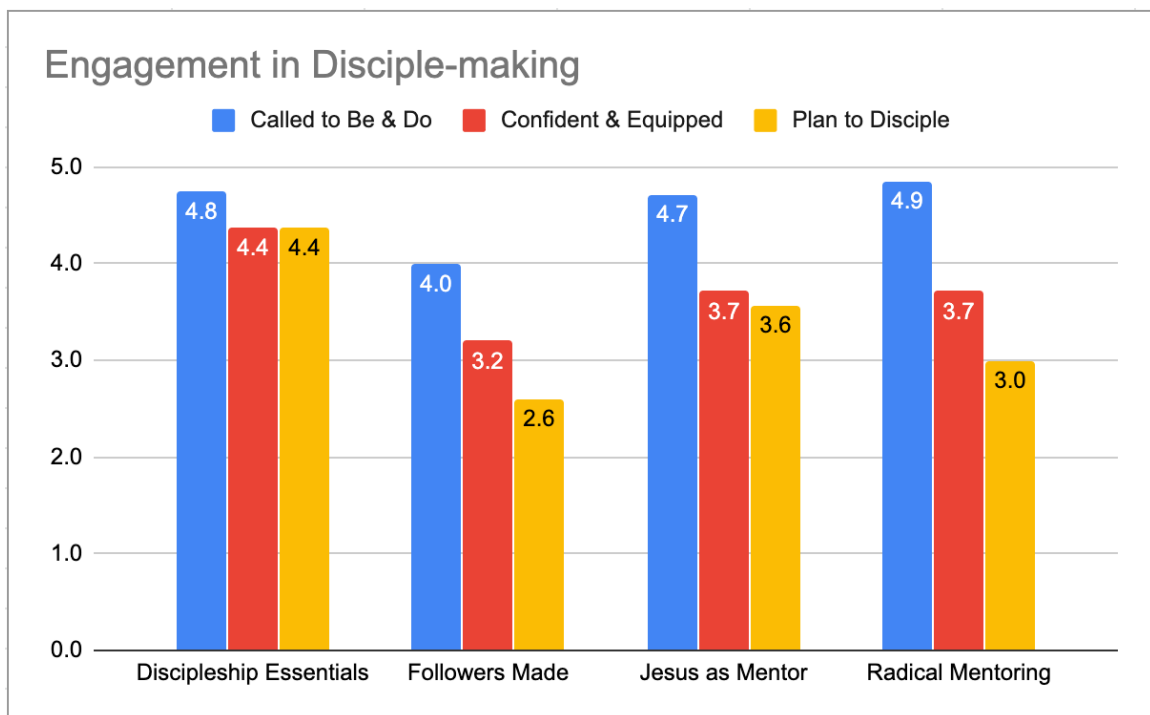


Figure 5-18. Comparison of Engagement in Disciple-making

The first disciple-making statement is, “I believe that I am called to be a disciple and also to be a disciple-maker.” Three of the four groups (DE, JAM, and RM) had scores ranging from 4.7 to 4.9, indicating a strong commitment to the belief that the participants were both disciples and disciple-makers. Two of the five participants in FM scored 3 on this question, indicating a lower level of belief and commitment to this statement.

The second disciple-making statement measured how well the discipleship program equipped the participants to disciple others: “I feel confident and equipped to personally disciple a group of people.” Discipleship Essentials was the only tool that participants indicated a high level of confidence in being able to disciple others. DE was also the only one of the programs with no scores of three from the participants. Four of the five participants in FM indicated a score of three (only somewhat true of me). Two of seven participants in JAM indicated a score of three, and the other five selected four, which does indicate that those five women do have a strong level of confidence in discipling others. The RM group had a mixture of responses, with three selecting a score of three, three selecting a score of four, and one selecting a score of five.

In my view, the high score for the DE groups is due to two factors: the inclusion of three chapters specifically on disciple-making and reproduction, and the format of the program such that leadership is rotated, resulting in experience in leading discipleship sessions by the time the program is completed. This second factor could be implemented into most discipleship programs as a way to equip the participants with on-the-job training.

The third disciple-making statement tested commitment to multiplication: “I plan to begin discipling a group of people within the next six months.” Comparing the plan to disciple with the confidence in being equipped to disciple, it is not surprising that the DE group expressed the highest level of commitment to discipling others. While the average DE score was the same for both statements, more participants selected a 5 (Very true of me) for the plan to disciple than the confidence in being equipped: five of the seven DE participants selected 5, while two selected 3 as compared to only two of the DE participants selected 5 on the previous statement, with the other five selecting 4. The JAM group also had similar scores between the two statements, however, one participant selected a 1 (Not at all true of me), one selected 2, one selected 3, one selected 4, and three selected 5.

Both the RM and FM groups indicated a greater difference between the scores of the second and third statements, with a difference of .7 and .6 respectively. Both of these groups had one respondent that indicated a 5 on their intention to disciple others within the next six months. The RM group also had one person that responded 4, two that responded 3, and three that responded with a 2. The other four from the FM group all responded with a 2, indicating a very low probability that they would disciple others within the next six months. From the responses to the disciple-making statements section, it is clear that the Discipleship Essentials program and curriculum has done the best job in these samples of equipping and motivating the participants to become disciple-makers themselves.

Missional Living Statements

The first of two missional living statements evaluated by this assessment relates to a missional commitment: “I have a greater conviction of my role in reaching lost people through relationships, serving and witness.” Similar to the responses to the first disciple-making statement, the RM and DE groups scored highest in this area as well. However, the overall level of commitment to missional engagement was lower than the belief that one is a disciple and disciple-maker. While only one group scored any 3’s in the first statement, all four groups had participants that scored 3’s, indicating more people who did not share this belief. The second Missional Living statement that participants responded to was, “I am more engaged relationally with unsaved neighbors, co-workers, or family members to help them to come to know Jesus.”

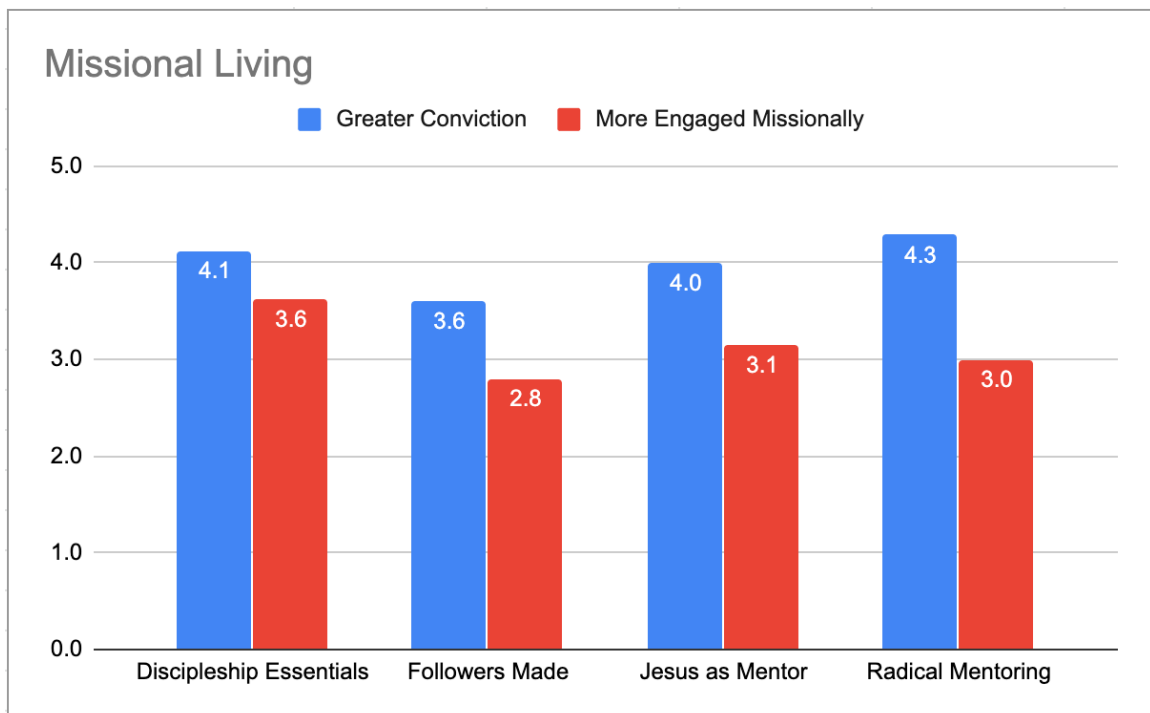


Figure 5-19. Comparison of Conviction to Engagement in Missional Living

Comparing the responses to these two statements, there is clearly a disparity between the conviction of missional living and the actual practice of missional living. There is a score difference ranging from .5 for the DE groups to 1.3 for the RM group. The following chart shows the variance between conviction and practice in the participants' lives.

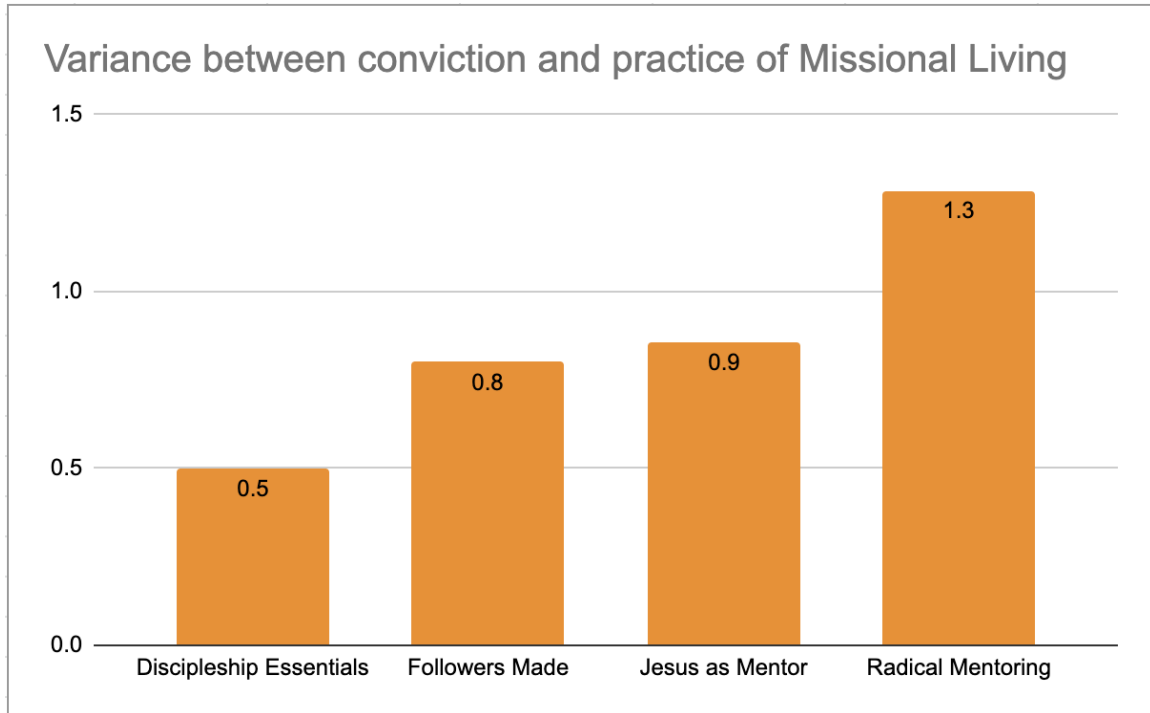


Figure 5-20. Variance Between Conviction and Practice of Missional Living

As seen in the comparison chart below, the average Missional Living score for the four groups was significantly lower than the average Disciple-making score. This identifies a key area that our disciple-making efforts at Venture needs to develop. Missing from all four of the programs were specific outreach opportunities to go into the community to serve others and share Christ. The best discipleship curriculum that intentionally trained participants in missional living is Followers Made, which includes a

module on the B.L.E.S.S. strategy of reaching out to neighbors in a practical and relational way.

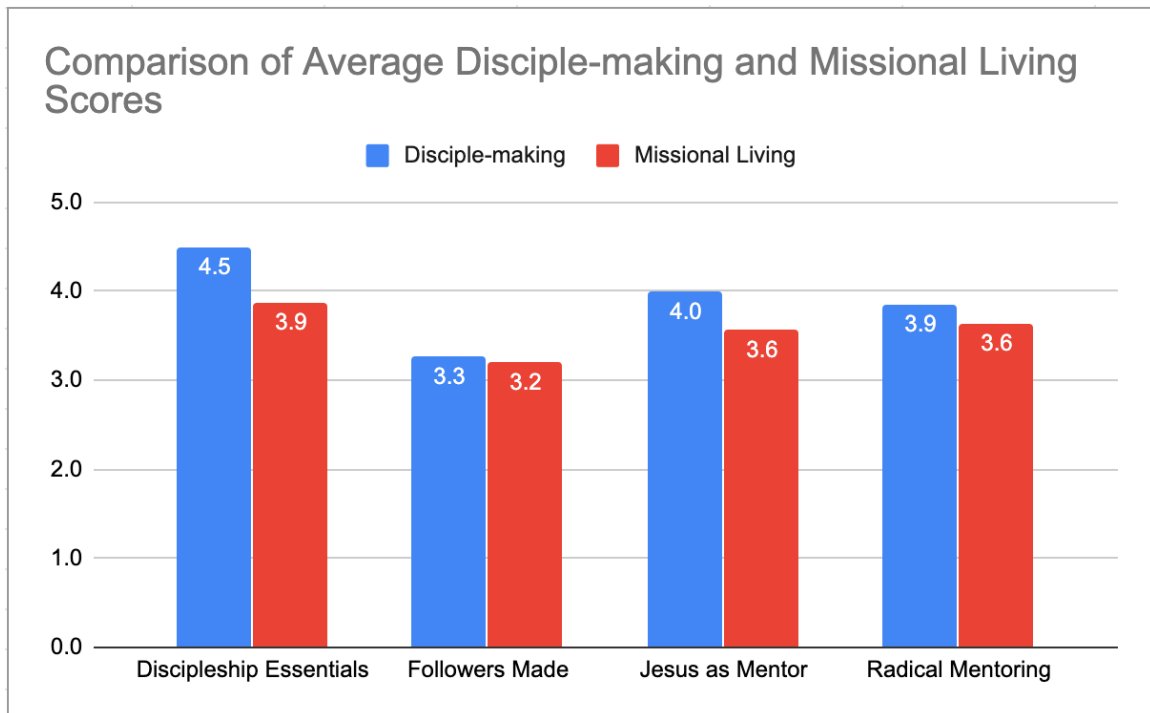


Figure 5-21. Comparison of Average Disciple-making and Missional Living Scores

Spiritual Disciplines

The third category evaluated by this assessment relates to the practices of spiritual disciplines, which influences the first outcome of Redemptive Disciple-making, *Being with Jesus*. The first statement evaluates the desire and consistency of engaging in spiritual practices, while the second statement evaluates the usage of new spiritual disciplines. The third statement is designed to draw out the effectiveness of the disciplines and the discipleship program in helping the participant grow closer in *Being with Jesus*. See Figure 5-22 below for the comparison of the responses to the three statements in the Spiritual Disciplines section.

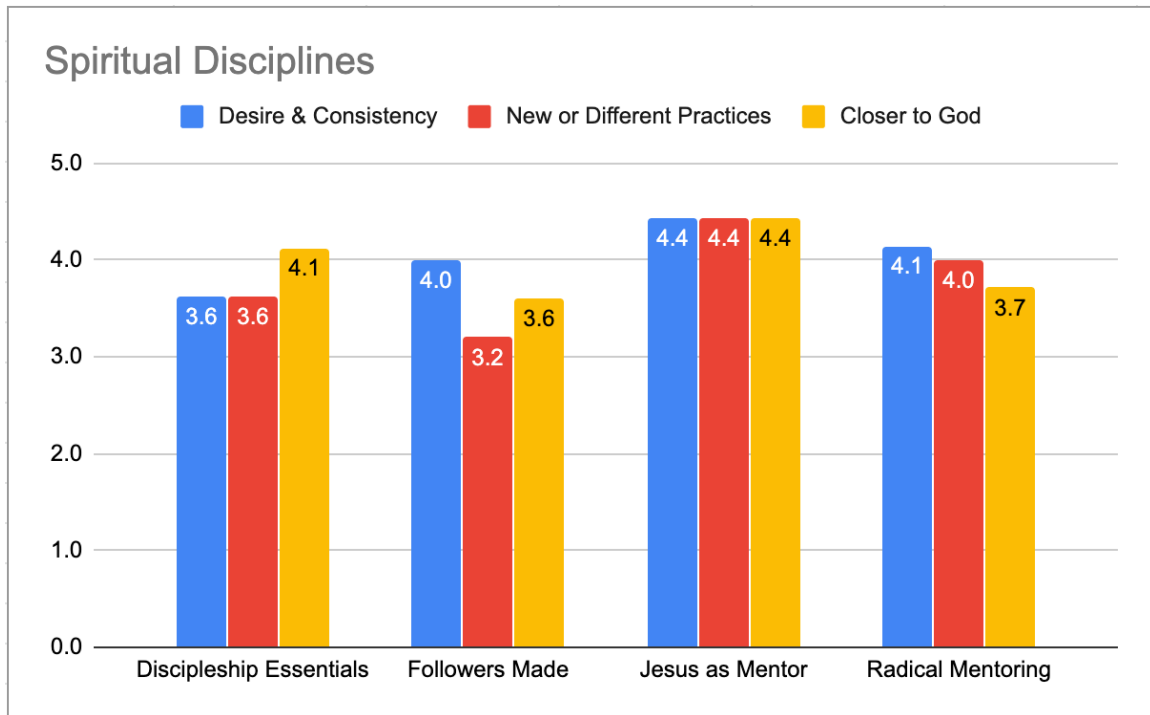


Figure 5-22. Comparison of Desire and Practice of Spiritual Disciplines

The JAM group had the highest scores on all three of the statements, consistently at 4.4 for each one, demonstrating the greatest effectiveness in helping the participants develop their spiritual disciplines and intimacy with God. A surprising outcome is that the DE group scored lower on both the first two statements, scoring 3.6 on each, yet had the second highest response (4.1) to feeling closer in personal relationship with God. The Followers Made program included online Bible reading and journaling as a part of the discipleship experience, with accountability through discipleship partners online and discussion at the weekly discipleship gathering. These contributed to a higher score in the desire and consistency category.

Activating Spiritual Gifts

The one statement from this assessment that related to the use of Spiritual Gifts was: “I am using my spiritual gifts and abilities to serve God more than I did before.”

The following chart compares this response with three statements that relate to spiritual gifts from the Believe Checkup in Gloop.

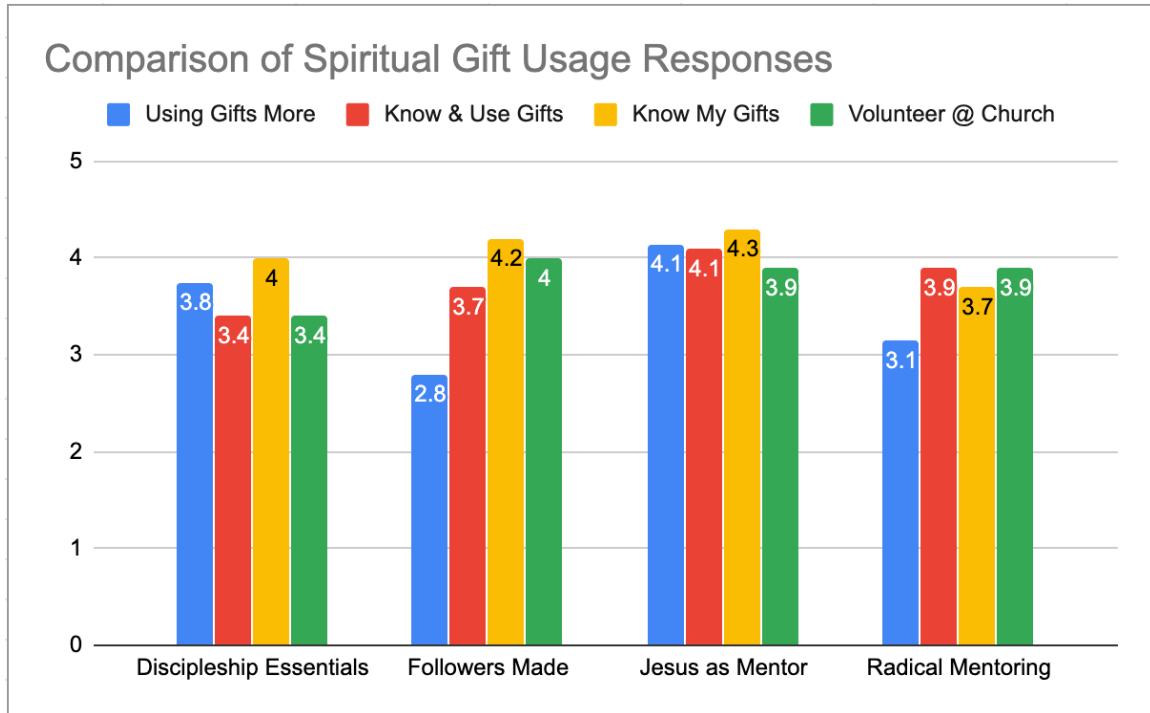


Figure 5-23. Comparison of Spiritual Gift Usage

For all four discipleship programs, the participants have a fairly high level of understanding their gifts and the usage of those gifts in serving. The increase of gift usage numbers were lower for the FM and RM groups, which may be due to the fact that no time has elapsed after the completion of these programs as compared to the completion of DE and JAM programs in the January and March time frames respectively.

The FM curriculum includes an excellent resource on discovering your spiritual gifts and engaging in ministry that fits your gifts, passion, and personal story. In *Discover*

Your Place, authors Rob Wegner and Brian Phipps present a biblical and practical assessment to discover one's GPS: "Gifts, Passion, and Story."⁵ After completing the GPS assessment, participants receive a document that summarizes the three areas, providing a tool for the discipleship group to discuss together and help each other clarify their calling to serve God with their lives.

Usage and Recommendation of Discipleship Curriculum

The two statements in this section gathered the perspective of participants on whether they would use the curriculum that they went through to disciple others, and whether or not they would recommend others to go through the same curriculum. While JAM had very high values in terms of spiritual growth and the women recommending that others go through the program, the plan to use this curriculum to disciple others was much lower, probably due to the fact that the format includes large group teaching which depends on a master discipler. This makes the JAM material less transferable for other women to start their own discipleship group. The scores for DE were both high in using and recommending the program and curriculum to others. DE is very self-contained in a single book with clear instructions, and over the time of completing the material as a group, it engages participants in being disciple-makers, as well as in being disciples.

5. Rob Wegner and Brian Phipps, *Find Your Place: Locating Your Calling Through Your Gifts, Passions, and Story* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019).

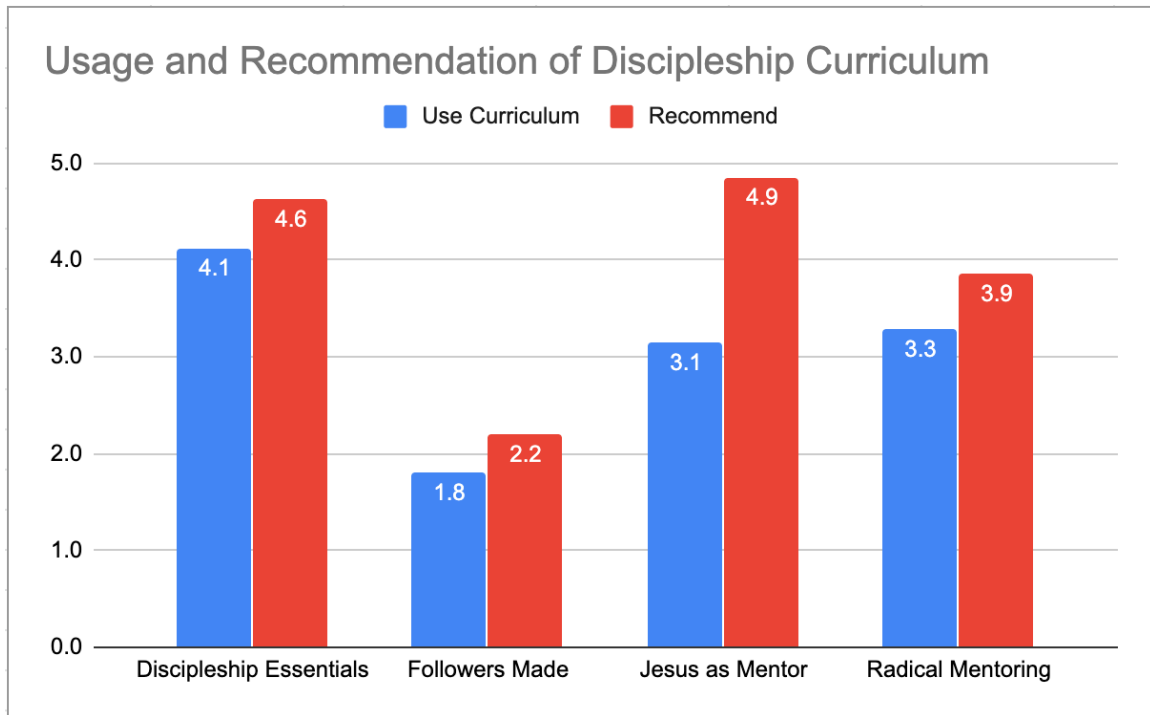


Figure 5-24. Comparison of Usage or Recommendation of Discipleship Curriculum

The comments in the open-ended questions from the participants of FM shed some light on why they scored low in both using and recommending FM to others. In response to the question, “What would you recommend changing in order to make this discipleship curriculum more effective?” one participant wrote, “We are reading a lot of different materials that don't all seem to be connected. It would be good to have an understanding of WHY we are reading the material, what the overarching goals are, and how the daily Scripture reading supports that.” Another participant responded with similar thoughts: “Being clear on expected outcomes and tracking progress along the way; start a book and complete it, reading too disjointed, not clear what we are supposed to get out of reading each book, continuity lost due to switching reading assignment across 5 books.”

Scripture Engagement Survey

The American Bible Society (ABS) states, “Engaging Scripture is the number one predictor of spiritual health and growth.”⁶ Their Scripture Engagement Survey poses 14 questions that provides a snapshot of participants beliefs and usage of Scripture in their lives. “The 14 questions fall into categories that most influence the concept of Scripture engagement: Frequency (how often people interact with the Bible), Centrality (how the Bible shapes their choices), and Impact (how the Bible transforms their relationships).”⁷ The results of the survey categorized people into five different profiles, ranging from Bible Disengaged to Bible Centered. ABS defines these five categories as,⁸

- **Bible Disengaged:** The majority of Bible Disengaged people do not interact with the Bible at all.
- **Bible Neutral:** A Bible Neutral person interacts with the Bible sporadically, which may mean accessing it anywhere from weekly to annually, but it has little or no impact on their life.
- **Bible Friendly:** Bible Friendly individuals typically consider themselves as Christians and interact with the Bible on a more frequent basis but may not consider their faith important, so the Bible has little impact in their lives.
- **Bible Engaged:** Those who are Bible Engaged are much more likely to use the Bible on a daily to weekly basis (89%) and to say that it influences their lives in significant ways.
- **Bible Centered:** Those who are Bible Centered engage Scripture daily (80%) or once to several times each week (19%). It shapes their thinking and behaviors and is of high importance to them.

6. American Bible Society, <https://www.americanbible.org/uploads/content/engaging-scripture-is-the-1-predictor-of-spiritual-health-and-growth.pdf>, accessed September 7, 2019, 1.

7. State of the Bible, 2018, American Bible Society, <https://1s712.americanbible.org/cdn-www-03/uploads/content/state-of-the-bible-2018.pdf>, accessed September 7, 2019, 5.

8. State of the Bible, 2018, 6-7.

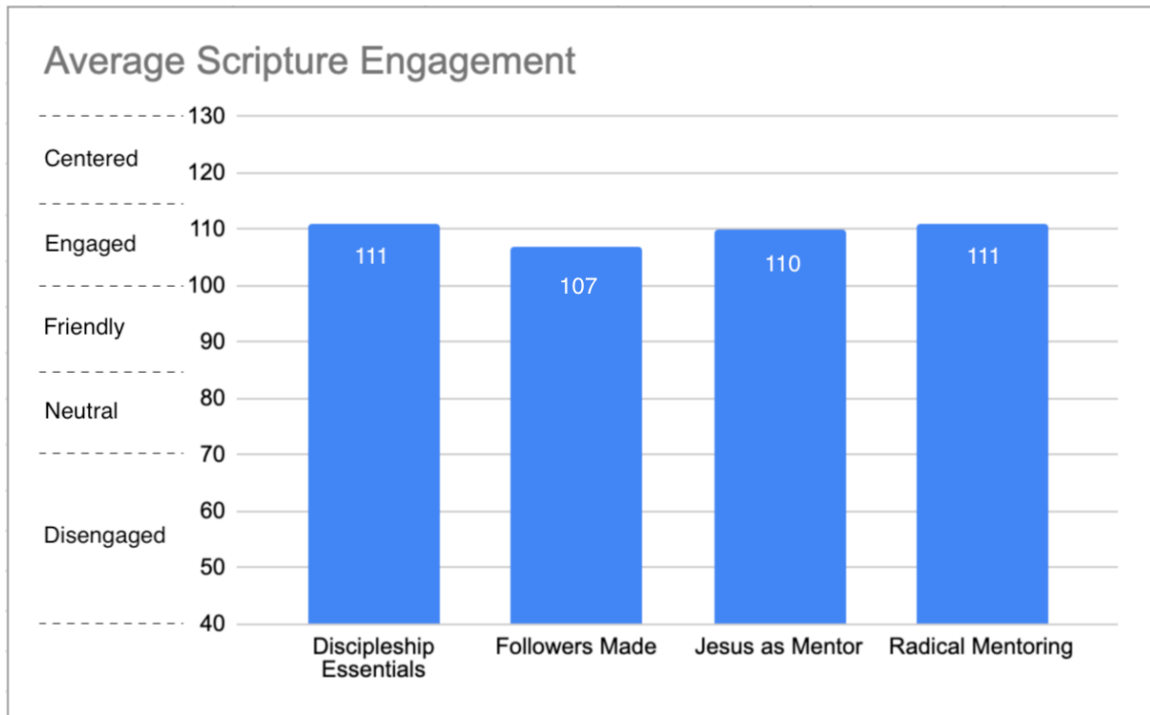


Figure 5-25. Average Scripture Engagement by Group

The average score for Scripture Engagement for the participants in the four discipleship programs were in the Bible Engaged range. However, the percentage of participants in each category varied from Group to Group. JAM had the highest number and percentage of individuals who were Bible Centered, yet it was surprising that one of the participants identified as Bible Neutral and another one identified as Bible Friendly, both categories which indicate a more casual involvement with the Bible. The FM group also had one person in the Bible Friendly category. See Table 5-1 below for numbers and percentages of participants by Scripture Engagement categories.

Table 5-1. Level of Scripture Engagement

INDIVIDUALS BY LEVEL OF SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT				
	DE	FM	JAM	RM
Bible Disengaged	0	0	0	0
Bible Neutral	0	0	1 (14.3%)	0
Bible Friendly	0	1 (20%)	1 (14.3%)	0
Bible Engaged	6 (87.5%)	3 (60%)	2 (28.6%)	5 (71.4%)
Bible Centered	2 (12.5%)	1 (20%)	3 (42.9%)	2 (28.6%)

Seven Essential Factors of Redemptive Disciple-making

I began this thesis-project with the assertion that there are seven essential factors that must be present in order to produce the outcomes of *being with Jesus*, *becoming like Jesus*, and *doing things that Jesus did*. This study revealed that in the four disciple-making programs used at Venture, there are strengths and weaknesses of each in relation to the seven essential factors. All four of the groups were strong in the first three factors: engaging in spiritual disciplines, embracing biblical truth, and experiencing transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit. The four discipleship programs did facilitate growth in the fourth factor, but all have room for improvement: forming loving relationships. The final three factors of experiencing ministry activities, missional living, and multiplication of disciples had varying levels of success in the different discipleship groups.

Spiritual Disciplines

All four of the programs included practices that helped participants engage in regular spiritual disciplines, especially Bible reading and prayer. The results from the

Believe Checkup indicate that the JAM program did the best job of facilitating growth in spiritual disciplines, which was also confirmed in the Redemptive Disciple-making Assessment. The RM group also demonstrated growth in their spiritual disciplines. A strength of the FM program is its online Bible reading and journaling with accountability in triads to keep up with those practices.

Embracing Biblical Truth

All four of the discipleship programs include a strong engagement with Scripture, both in the teaching and gathering times, and in the homework assignments. DE incorporates a robust inductive Bible study in each session's homework and weekly discussion, which equips participants in Bible study methods and develops their Bible study habits over the period of time required to complete the study. Differences indicated in participants 10 Beliefs could easily be attributed to the varied levels of spiritual maturity in participants' lives.

Transformation by the Holy Spirit

Similar to the first two essentials, all four of the discipleship programs resulted in life transformation in the participants. There is a wide variation in the categories of "Single Mindedness" and "Total Surrender" in the results of the Believe Checkup, ranging from 91% and 99% for the RM group to 18% and 72% for the FM. Additional follow up questions would be helpful to unpack these findings, but as with the Biblical Truth category, the differences in the survey could be largely due to different levels of spiritual maturity in those who participated.

Loving Relationships

From the 10 Practices in the Believe Checkup, all four groups score with 99-100% in the Biblical Community category, indicating that each participant felt a high degree of connection with other believers. However, the scores in the Love category in the 10 Virtues section presents a confusing picture. The DE Group had a Love score of 13%, the FM group had a Love score of 16%, the JAM group had a Love score of 81% and the RM group had a Love score of 47%. This, too, is an area where further investigation would prove helpful to understanding the wide variance in the scores. Looking at some of the comments from the question, “What would you recommend changing in order to make this discipleship curriculum more effective?” in the Redemptive Disciple-making Assessment, all three of the men’s groups added suggestions that included more relational time together outside of the regular group meeting. The RM group incorporates relationship building through an initial retreat where participants share their stories with each other and concludes with a final two-day retreat for participants to process their learnings and plan how to move forward into continued spiritual growth, health, and ministry.

Ministry Experiences

Of the seven essential practices of redemptive disciple-making, this category was the weakest for all four discipleship programs. While the surveys indicated that many of the participants were serving in ministries at the church and in the community, the discipleship programs themselves did not incorporate specific activities that provided opportunities to experience ministry service. JAM incorporates experiences of extended prayer better than the other programs, and also does a good job of teaching practical skills

of cultivating a deep and growing relationship with God. All of the programs encourage engagement of heart development and not just growth in knowledge but need supplementing by the group leaders with activities to engage the participants in ministry.

Missional Living

This category is closely related to the previous one but focuses more specifically on the evangelistic engagement of the community in which one lives. The FM program shines in this area with the incorporation of two of the six resources that focus on both the philosophy and practice of missional living. The application of the missional living component in FM comes down to the passion of the leader to engage personally in missional activities and to encourage and include the participants in doing the same. As shown in Figure 5-20 above, all four of the groups showed an increase in the conviction of Missional Living yet had a significant gap in living out the conviction from the conviction itself.

Multiplication

The DE program did the best job of teaching and equipping the participants to multiply in discipling others. The other three programs indicated a low to moderate commitment to discipling others. As with Missional Living, the conviction and passion of the disciple-maker for multiplication will pass on the conviction and passion of multiplication to the participants. An intentional component of multiplication could be incorporated into any of the discipleship programs. The participants of the FM program scored the lowest on being equipped to disciple, planning to disciple, and desire to use the material to disciple others. While I believe the content of FM is excellent and as was stated earlier, is the best of the four programs in equipping for Missional Living,

participants shared two factors that frustrated them: jumping from resource to resource instead of working through one resource at time, and the lack of clarity week-by-week how the material fit together and where it was heading.

Recommendations

Jesus said, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). He did not say that we would be known by our vast knowledge of doctrine or by how amazing our worship services are. The call of the church is to make disciples and the mark of a disciple is love. The cultivation of loving relationships in a discipleship process is far more important than the curriculum or program that we use. A redemptive disciple-making ministry should focus on developing relationships beyond a weekly or monthly meeting, and like the Radical Mentoring program, a good practice would be to incorporate an initial retreat where participants connect and share their life stories with each other. The discipleship relationships also need to go beyond the regular meeting times with the group enjoying meals, recreation, and ministry activities together. Not only does this facilitate growth in loving relationships, it also provides greater opportunities for conversations to address the deeper needs in the participants lives.

A weakness in some discipleship programs is focusing primarily on spiritual growth and not on spiritual activities and ministries that get people into the community and the world to love people who may or may not know God. A solution to this weakness is to incorporate intentional outreach events into the discipleship ministry, which may mean serving in a local outreach ministry or traveling somewhere to serve on a mission project together. Another way to missionally engage the community is to identify needs

in the neighborhoods where group members live and then work together to get to know neighbors and begin building redemptive relationships.

Rather than offering many different discipleship options, a church should develop a clear and simple pathway of discipleship, then equip the leaders through discipleship experiences so they become the champions and reproducers of disciple-making.

Sometimes the enemy of “the best” is “the good”: activities and programs that minister to people but do not reach the lost or develop reproducing disciple-makers. The difficult responsibility of leadership in the local church is to eliminate those things that are good but may be preventing the church from fully embracing its disciple-making mandate.

Changes at Venture Christian Church

My recommendation for our Discipleship Pathway at Venture is to begin with the Believe Checkup to help people understand where they are on their spiritual journey. This could be accomplished through our First Step and Next Step series by adding a one-session Discover Discipleship class that would lay out the biblical foundations for discipleship, the Venture Discipleship Pathway, as well as conducting the Believe Checkup in the classroom. Each participant would be given the opportunity to meet one-on-one with a discipleship coach to determine a next step on their spiritual journey and set one or two spiritual goals for the coming year. The coach would listen to their spiritual story, review the assessment, and ask a series of questions to guide the conversation. For those who are Exploring Christ, a great next step would be the Alpha program, which will help answer core questions and guide them to make a decision to receive Christ. For those who are already believers and in the Growing in Christ category, the next step would be to attend the eight-session Growing Closer to God group, which

will lay a solid foundation for them to begin developing spiritual disciplines and to grow in foundational beliefs of the Christian faith. Those who are in the Close to Christ phase, invite them to join a group that works through the nine-week *The Good and Beautiful God* book and exercises. And those who are in the Christ-Centered phase of the journey are ready to go through *Discipleship Essentials* to equip them to disciple others.

In order for the above Discipleship Pathway to incorporate the principles of redemptive disciple-making, it will be imperative that we equip disciple-makers with a framework of the seven essential factors as they invest in the discipleship of others. Those leaders and disciplers must believe and practice that disciple-making is based first and foremost on building relationships with those they disciple. Each class and group should supplement the curriculum and group times with relationship building opportunities, ministry activities, and missional outreaches.

Changes in My Discipleship Practices

Through the research of this project and the evaluation of the discipleship programs at Venture, I realize that there are some areas that I need to personally change in my disciple-making. From the seven essential factors of redemptive disciple-making, I need to incorporate more relationship development beyond the meeting time, and to plan specific times of engaging in ministry and outreach projects together. Moving forward, I will begin my disciple-making activities of those who have moved beyond the basics by going through the nine chapters of *The Good and Beautiful God*. In addition to the soul-training exercises from each week, participants will engage in daily Bible reading and journaling. We will meet together for a meal and brief sharing of our life stories once during the nine weeks of completing the material. When we have finished the book, the

group will engage in a local outreach project that gives opportunity to serve people in need and to begin building relationship with those being served. The group members will participate in the selection and planning of the ministry project to undertake.

One reason to begin with a shorter resource is that it lowers the length of commitment required from those being challenged to join the discipleship group. It will also allow me to assess the level of desire and willingness to go on to a greater challenge of a longer discipleship group. For those who demonstrate faithfulness, availability and teachability, I will challenge them to join me for a seven to nine-month group that will work through *Discipleship Essentials*. This second step discipleship group will begin with an overnight retreat, perhaps a camping trip or stay in a cabin in the mountains, where we will have the opportunity to share our life stories in a more in-depth way and to enjoy recreation, meals, and laughter together. Over the course of completing this resource, the group will get together periodically for meals, participate in an extended prayer event with the church, and engage in at least two neighborhood outreaches.

After finishing *Discipleship Essentials*, those who are ready to begin their own discipleship groups will begin praying about who to invite, and then challenge them to join their group. Some may want to work with those in different phases of the spiritual journey, and may choose to lead an Alpha group, Growing Closer to God group, or may want to repeat the process that they just completed and begin leading a group through *The Good and Beautiful God*. These new disciple-makers will be involved in the Discover Discipleship seminar as leaders who will provide next-step discipleship opportunities.

Reflection on this Project

After conducting this project and writing this thesis, I believe that there are two things that I would have done differently. First of all, rather than using the Scripture Engagement Survey, it would have been more helpful to write additional questions for the Redemptive Disciple-making Assessment, with at least three questions for each of the seven essential factors. This would have provided direct correlation measurement with the seven factors. Secondly, I would have used both the Believe Checkup and Redemptive Disciple-making questions in a pre-discipleship survey, and then conduct the assessments again after completion of each discipleship program. This would have provided better comparison data to measure the actual changes experienced by the participants of each program.

Conclusion

This project began with a thesis, “A biblical redemptive disciple-making process is an essential tool in the development of redemptive leaders,” and four questions to explore the validity of the thesis. In the pages of this document, these four questions have been answered:

1. What is the biblical pattern for disciple-making and in what ways is it redemptive? Disciple-making is the mission of the church and is God’s way of reaching the lost and bringing them to maturity. The New Testament presents discipleship as a highly relational activity that moves people into deeper intimacy with God, transforming their character, and mobilizing them for kingdom mission. Disciple-making is redemptive in rescuing people from the

kingdom of darkness and helping them to grow into their God-created potential. Redemptive disciple-making equips people to disciple others.

2. What are the essential factors of a disciple-making ministry that would qualify it as being redemptive? There are seven essential factors that must be included in a redemptive disciple-making ministry: Engaging in spiritual disciplines, embracing biblical truth that shapes worldview, experiencing transformation through the work of the Holy Spirit, forming loving relationships with others that journey together in spiritual formation, experiencing ministry activities that move the discipleship experience from the head to the heart, missional living that draws others to Christ, and multiplication of disciples.
3. How does redemptive disciple-making correlate to redemptive leadership? Jesus was the consummate redemptive leader in the way that he served, led, and loved people. Redemptive disciple-making equips redemptive leaders by helping participants develop godly character and facilitating the transforming work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Furthermore, as emerging leaders develop a biblically-formed worldview, they will develop core values based on biblical principles that will lead them to become servant-hearted and humble leaders.
4. What measurable changes resulted from taking a group of people through a redemptive discipleship experience? The assessments demonstrated that all four discipleship programs resulted in positive changes in participants' practice of spiritual disciplines, growth in understanding biblical truths, and transformation in their character.

The hypothesis, “A biblical redemptive disciple-making process is an essential tool in the development of redemptive leaders,” has been validated through discipling groups of people, and then assessing their growth and equipping to be redemptive leaders. Redemptive leaders need to be equipped through a disciple-making process that addresses their whole life, is biblically rooted, and is characterized by the seven essential factors described above.

In conclusion, I would invite church leaders to ask if their disciple-making efforts are producing the result of people *being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing the things that Jesus did*. There are many excellent resources and discipleship programs available today, but as they are implemented, should incorporate the seven essential factors described in this project. May the Holy Spirit renew our churches to be disciple-making communities like Jesus modeled for us thousands of years ago, and that he calls the church to become today.

APPENDIX A

DISCIPLESHIP PATHWAY AT VENTURE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FirstStep Pathway: (Outcome: Become a partner [member])

1. **Intro** - Meet with pastors & staff to learn about VCC and get to know others who are new to Venture. Highly relational, covers (1) vision, (2) the different ministries of VCC, (3) what we believe - attendees hear the gospel and are given an opportunity to receive Christ.
Outcome: receive Christ, return to the meal with pastors.
2. **Lunch** - Tim shares his story and covers the partnership agreement; invites people to become ministry partners. Q&A.
Outcome: commit to partnership, return for Discover Your Design.

NextStep Pathway: (Outcomes: begin serving; take a step into community and discipleship)

1. **Discover Your Design 1** – The goal of Discover Your Design is to learn more about spiritual gifts, personality, passion, and calling and then to begin to serve in an area that uses a person's design. The focus of Session 1 is Spiritual Gifts.
2. **Discover Your Design 2** – The focus of Session 2 is Personality and Passion.
Outcome: begin serving.
3. **Discover Discipleship** - Teaching on why discipleship is the goal of the church and the expected engagement of every Christian. This seminar will include an assessment to help each person understand where they are on their spiritual journey and propose clear next steps that each one can pursue.
Outcome: launch them into the discipleship pathway; some may want to go into an affinity group or general Life Group and do the discipleship pathway at a later time

Discipleship Pathway: entry point dependent on their assessment (Outcomes: Be with Jesus; Become like Jesus; Do what Jesus did)

1. **Alpha:** Interested or new Believers begin their journey here; moves a person from Interested to Believer (12+/- weeks)
2. **Growing Closer to God:** Believers and Followers begin their journey here; moves a person from Believer to Follower and establishes Followers in a stronger relationship with God (8 weeks) [See Below]
3. **The Good & Beautiful God:** Disciples who are not already equipped and discipling begin their journey here; shifts their perspective on the character of God and how he views his children, and prepares them for discipleship equipping (9 weeks)
4. **Discipleship Essentials:** equips participants to disciple others; moves a person from Follower to Discipled (6-9 months)

Growing Closer to God Outline

Topic	In-class Exercise	Take-home Exercise
Quiet Time + Journaling	10 min QT w discussion	Daily QT + journal
Holy Spirit	Pray to be filled w Spirit	Daily spiritual breathing
Identity	Read identity declarations aloud	Read "Who God Says I Am" 2x/day
Prayer + Fasting	Group prayer	Pray
Silence & Solitude	Silence exercise	Silence & Solitude practice 2x short, or 1x extended
Forgiving Others	Forgiveness exercise	Practice forgiveness & blessing
Spiritual Warfare 1	Confession & repentance	Read "Who God Says I Am" 30 days
Spiritual Warfare 2	Inner healing exercise	Praying with authority & faith

APPENDIX B

A DISCIPLE'S COVENANT¹

In order to grow toward maturity and complete *Discipleship Essentials*, I commit myself to the following standards:

1. Complete all assignments on a weekly basis prior to my discipleship appointment in order to contribute fully (see “Suggested Study Format”).
2. Meet weekly with my discipleship partners for approximately one and one-half hours to dialogue over the content of the assignments.
3. Offer myself fully to the Lord with the anticipation that I am entering a time of accelerated transformation during this discipleship period.
4. Contribute to a climate of honesty, trust and personal vulnerability in a spirit of mutual upbuilding.
5. Give serious consideration to continuing the discipling chain by committing myself to invest in at least two other people for the year following the initial completion of *Discipleship Essentials*.

Signed _____

Dated _____

(The above commitments are the minimum standards of accountability, which are reviewed and renewed after lessons eight and sixteen. Feel free to add any other elements to your covenant.)

1. Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, Exp. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 14.

APPENDIX C
OUTLINE OF DISCIPLESHIP ESSENTIALS¹

Part 1: Growing Up in Christ

1. Making Disciples
2. Being a Disciple
3. Quiet Time
4. Bible Study
5. Prayer
6. Worship

Part 2: Understanding the Message of Christ

7. The Three-Person God
8. Made in God's Image
9. Sin
10. Grace
11. Redemption
12. Justification
13. Adoption

Part 3: Becoming Like Christ

14. Filled with the Holy Spirit
15. Fruit of the Holy Spirit
16. Trust
17. Love
18. Justice
19. Witness

Part 4: Serving Christ

20. The Church
21. Ministry Gifts
22. Spiritual Warfare
23. Walking in Obedience
24. Sharing the Wealth

Bonus Section

25. Money

5-6. 1. Greg Ogden, *Discipleship Essentials*, Exp. ed. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007),

APPENDIX D

OUTLINE OF FOLLOWERS MADE

Followers Made 2.0 Reading Plan:						
Date	<i>Prodigal God</i>	<i>Find Your Place</i>	<i>Pursuit of Hol.</i>	<i>Discover Miss.</i>	<i>Missional Ess.</i>	<i>Chair Time</i>
week 1	intro, parable, 1					
week 2		Intro & 1				
week 3						All
week 4				Pages 13-35	Pages 4-7	
week 5			1,2			
week 6		2				
week 7			3,4			
week 8				Pages 37-44	Pages 8-11	
week 9	2					
week 10			5			
week 11				Pages 47-55	Pages 12-17	
week 12			6,7			
week 13			8,9			
week 14		3				
week 15	3,4					
week 16				Pages 57-65		
week 17			10			
week 18			11,12			
week 19			13,14			
week 20	5					
week 21				Pages 67-76	Pages 18-21	
week 22			15-16			
week 23		4				
week 24	6					
week 25	7		17			
week 26		5 & Conclusion				All

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APPENDIX E

OUTLINE OF JESUS AS MENTOR

Year 1 – Strengthening the Foundation

Session 1 Jesus as Mentor

- JAM manual / Spiritual Growth Notebook
- How to track our spiritual growth
- Three ring cards
- God's perspective vs. man's
- Group discussion: See the visible vs. invisible world
- Homework: read Chapter 2

Session 2 The Living God – Listen to Him

- Video – Finding God
- Group discussion – how to hear God /secret place Ps 91
- Who is God? – group exercise
- Group discussion – Character of God / higher view of God
- Homework: Find Scriptures for two character traits of God; read Chapter 3

Session 3 The Living Word of God – Learn from Him

- Video – the very words of God
- Chapter discussion/ group exercise Deeper into the Word of God
- Small group discussion / exercise tracking our spiritual growth
- Homework: Using the Spiritual Growth Binder, choose a subject to study

Session 4 Jesus as the Living Word – Walk with Him

- Video – Jesus as the Living water
- Chapter discussion/ group exercise Jesus train and equip us
- Small group discussion / exercise
- Homework: Journal walking with Him

Sessions 5-6 Who You are in Him – Identity

- Who we are
- Who we are in Him
- We are disciples
- Go from 'I am' to 'I will'

Year 2 – Trained to Walk in the Spirit

Session 7 God's Training Program

- Understand His training process for us
- See the difference between how we train our soul and how He trains our spirit
- Scriptures re: the synergy between soul and spirit – spiritual spark

Sessions 8-9 Training of the Soul

- Think His thoughts – renewed, transformed mind
- Feel His Feelings – compassion, hope, agape love
- Pray His prayers – intercessory prayer
- Speak His words – bless and encourage
- Do His works – walk with others, minister peace and hope

Sessions 10-11 Training of the Spirit

- Trained in wisdom, fear of the Lord,
- Right spirit and dying to self
- Discernment, worship
- Road to Emmaus – He opens up the Scriptures
- He gives insight and understanding
- Walking in His power

Session 12 Equipped and Ready

- God's wardrobe closet
- Building your spiritual strength
- Spiritual Gifts
- Run – video

APPENDIX F

RADICAL MENTORING – SAMPLE 9-MONTH MATRIX

Topic	Date	Discussion	Mentor Preparation	Book for next month	Assignments for next month	Verses for next month
Kickoff Meeting	Early Sept.	Vision, intros, calendars, expectations, covenants, homework	Email asking for bio and covenant, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>Bo's Café</i> , Lynch, Thrall, McNicol	Relational: Five Feet for Five Minutes	First: Matt. 6:33 Light: Matt. 5:16
First Meeting	Late Sept.	<i>Bo's Café</i> , Five Feet for Five Minutes, mentor shares story	Net-out, Scripture memory, logistics for overnight, prepare your full story	<i>Identity</i> , Eric Geiger	Relational: Choose to Lose Personal: Words that Describe Me	Faith: Gal. 2:20 New Creation: 2 Cor. 5:17
Story Retreat (Identity)	Oct.	<i>Identity</i> , Choose to Lose, Words that Describe Me, mentees share stories	Net-out, Scripture memory, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>The Good and Beautiful God</i> , James Bryan Smith	Relational: One Word	Abba Father: Gal. 4:6 God's Children: Eph. 1:5
Theology	Nov.	<i>The Good and Beautiful God</i> , One Word	Net-out, Scripture memory, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>Too Busy Not to Pray</i> , Bill Hybels	Relational: Praying with Your Wife Personal: Prayer Log	Prayer: Phil. 4:6 Listening to God: John 10:27
Prayer	Dec.	<i>Too Busy Not to Pray</i> , Praying With Your Wife, Prayer Log	Net-out, Scripture memory, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>Louder Than Words</i> , Andy Stanley	Relational: Looking for What's Good Personal: Your Character Weaknesses	Character: Matt. 12:33 Inner Accuser: Rom. 7:22-23
Godly Character	Jan.	<i>Louder Than Words</i> , Looking for What's Good, Your Character Weaknesses	Net-out, Scripture memory, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>What Radical Husbands Do</i> , Regi Campbell	Relational: Love Note	Selflessness: Eph. 5:25 Honor: 1 Peter 3:7
Marriage	Feb.	<i>What Radical Husbands Do</i> , Love Note	Net-out, Scripture memory, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>Ordering Your Private World</i> , G. MacDonald	Relational: Who Does What Personal: Time Management	Time: Eph. 5:15-16 Renewing Your Mind: Rom. 12:2
Priorities	Mar.	<i>Ordering Your Private World</i> , Who Does What, Time Management	Net-out, Scripture memory, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>Why Church Matters</i> , Joshua Harris	Relational: Omit the Word You Personal: Personal Ministry Plan	Devoted to the Church: Acts 2:42 Encouragement: Heb. 10:25
Church	Apr.	<i>Why Church Matters</i> , Omit the Word You	Net-out, Scripture memory, growth partner pairings, prayer	<i>As Iron Sharpens Iron</i> , Howard and William Hendricks	Personal: Reflection	Disciple-Making: Matt. 28:19-20 Mentoring: Psalm 71:18
Commencement Retreat	May	<i>As Iron Sharpens Iron</i> , Reflection	Reflection, communion, Letter from God, prayer		Letter from God (done on retreat)	

APPENDIX G

QUIET TIME METHOD

The Best Moments of Your Day¹

Spending time alone with God in his Word, praying, and meditating is the best investment that you can make in your Christian life. Approach your daily devotional time with an attitude of expectancy that God wants to meet with you and cherishes spending time with you. He desires to carry you throughout the day with his presence instead of relying on your own strength for the battle.

“The eyes of the LORD search the whole earth in order to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him.” (2 Chron 16:9)

*“All scripture is God breathed and is useful for **teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training** in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* (2 Tim 3:16-17 – NIV)

Teaching: What I need to **know** about God, myself, and others.

Rebuking: What I need to **stop** believing or doing.

Correcting: What I need to **change** in my thoughts, attitudes, or actions.

Training in righteousness: What I need to **do** in obedience to God’s Word or His prompting.

Expect all Scripture to show me something that I need to **know, stop, change, or do**. The Holy Spirit uses God’s Word to lead us into truth (John 16:13) and to equip us for every good work. Allow God’s Spirit to teach you through Scripture today!

Use a plan: Select a book in the Bible. Begin with (a) one of the gospels such as John; or (b) one of the shorter letters such as Philippians, Ephesians or James. Then on a daily basis, do the following:

1. **Pray**, asking God to *“Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in Your law.”* (Ps. 119:18, NIV)
2. **Read** a short passage – usually a paragraph or two that contains a complete unit of thought.
3. **Write** in my journal (any notebook):
 - a. The verse or verses that are key to this passage
 - b. What the passage is saying

1. Adapted from “How to Have a Quiet Time You Don’t Want to Miss” by Lin Smith, (Vista, CA: Multiplication Ministries).

- c. What I should do as a result of this passage. Ask God what He wants me to **know**, **stop**, **change**, or **do** (2 Tim. 3:16) according to this passage.
- 4. **Praise** God for what this passage:
 - a. Reveals about God and His character
 - b. Says or promises about myself
 - c. Says or promises about others: my spouse, children, parents, friends, etc.
- 5. **Write** the key verse(s) on a 3x5 card to take with me. Underline key words or phrases from the verse.
- 6. **Meditate** on the key verse(s) throughout the day. Praise God often for the truths in these verses, using the “praise areas” in #4.
- 7. **Review** the key verse(s) just before bedtime. God uses His Word to “renew my mind.” (Rom 12:2)
- 8. **Keep Asking** God daily to give you a greater hunger, love and passion for him. (1 John 5:14-15)

APPENDIX H

OVERVIEW OF REDEMPITIVE DISCIPLE-MAKING

Being With Jesus:

- 1) Spiritual disciplines - *grow closer to Jesus*
 - a) Daily pursuit of intimacy
 - b) Filling of the Holy Spirit
 - c) Practicing the presence of God
 - d) Obedience
 - e) Other practices that draw me closer to Jesus:
 - i) Prayer
 - ii) Reading / studying the Bible
 - iii) Sabbath
 - iv) Reflection
 - v) Fasting
 - vi) Solitude
 - vii) Worship
 - viii) Serving ...

Becoming Like Jesus:

- 2) Character transformation - *become like Jesus*
 - a) Heart - what am I passionate about? Love the things that Jesus loves
 - b) Attitudes - thankful, humble, servant-hearted
 - c) Fruit of the Spirit
 - d) Integrity / honesty / faithfulness
 - e) Obedience to God
- 3) Loving relationships - *love others like Jesus*
 - a) Family relationships
 - b) Social relationships
 - c) Authentic community
 - i) Loving accountability
 - ii) Safe harbor - vulnerability & trust
 - iii) Sharing our stories
 - iv) Support during times of need
 - v) Eat together!
- 4) Biblical truth - *think like Jesus*
 - a) Renewed mind (Rom 12:2)
 - b) Biblical worldview
 - c) Understanding my identity as God's child
 - d) Replace lies with truth
 - e) Understand the faith
 - i) Who God is
 - ii) Who I am (identity)
 - iii) Forgiveness - forgiving others

- iv) Holy Spirit
- v) Surrender
- vi) ... (and much more!)
- f) Spiritual warfare

Do What Jesus Did: (not information only, but practical)

- 5) Ministry experiences - *do the things that Jesus did*
 - a) Prayer - personal, group & praying for others
 - b) Mission trips
 - c) Sharing your faith story
 - d) Witnessing
 - e) Disciple others
 - f) Teach
 - g) Serve in ministry or in the community
- 6) Missional living - *reach out like Jesus*
 - a) Relationships with neighbors, co-workers, family
 - b) Sharing faith
 - c) Serving those in need
 - d) Discover life purpose
 - e) Maximize Kingdom impact
 - f) Pray for sick, cast out demons
- 7) Multiplication - *reproduce disciples like Jesus did*
 - a) Make disciples who make disciples
 - b) Begin with the goal of reproduction
 - c) Each disciple living out their God-given purpose in ministry to others

APPENDIX I

ABUNDANT LIVING – NEW BELIEVER FOLLOW UP¹

ABUNDANT LIVING: SESSION 1 REDEEMED AND SET FREE!

During the coming weeks, we'll dig into Scripture to discover how to live the abundant life that Jesus promised us (John 10:10). Many Christians don't understand the reality of who they are in Christ, and as a result live in bondage to past sins, hurts, beliefs, and lies from the enemy. What you embrace as truth really does matter! Jesus said, "So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36)

Our prayer for you is that you will come to see God and yourself in a new light in the coming months, and from this point forward you will experience the life that Jesus gives to you as his child. Our assumption is that you are in this group because you want to discover all that God has in store for you. In order to do that, we're asking that you devote yourself to engage in every part of the Abundant Living experience. Make it a priority to attend the group every week and fully participate in the discussion and learning exercises. And just as importantly, set aside time every day to work through the take-home activities. We promise that if you will make time daily to read, pray, worship, and reflect, you will grow in your spiritual life like never before!

OPENING DISCUSSION

- Let's get to know each other (1-2 min/person): each person introduce yourself and share one interesting fact about your life.

EXPLORING THE TOPIC

As a foundation for Abundant Living, we will spend much time looking at what the Bible says about who God is, who we are, and what God says is true about us. We believe that the Bible is God's revelation to mankind, that it is truth from God, and can be depended on fully.

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (ESV)

1. Material developed by Dave Stewart, Ian O'Meara, James Grant and Jason Mayer, San Diego, CA, 2014.

When something you believe doesn't agree with what the Bible says, our challenge to you is to embrace the truth of the Bible, regardless of whether it "feels" right or not! We will either view God and ourselves based on our experiences and feelings, or we will view our experiences and ourselves through God's word and his character!

REFLECTION VERSE

Write out John 3:16

Why did God send Jesus to the world?

What is required for a person to have eternal life?

DIGGING INTO THE WORD

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

What is grace?

What are we saved from?

What is implied by the contrast of "gift" and "works" in verse 9?

What does it mean to have faith in God?

Read Colossians 1:12-14

How and why did God "qualify you" to share in his inheritance?

What does being called a “saint” imply about your real identity? (see what Paul calls every Christian in Ephesus in Ephesians 1:1)

For the next 2 questions, take a few minutes for personal reflection, then discuss with one other person in the group:

What does it mean to you personally to be forgiven?

What excites you the most about being a part of Jesus’ kingdom?

WRAP-UP

Have you trusted in Jesus to forgive your sins and to be your savior? If not, would you like to do that right now? If so, you can express that desire by praying a prayer like the following:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your son Jesus to be our Savior. I acknowledge that I have sinned and need to be forgiven. Thank you, Jesus, for choosing to die on the cross in my place. Please forgive my sins and come into my life to be my forgiver and my master. I believe that you are the Son of God and that you died and rose from the dead. I trust you to now lead my life and choose to follow you.

Thank you for delivering me from the domain of darkness and transferring me into your kingdom. In Jesus name, Amen!

If that prayer expressed your heart’s desire, you are now a child of God (see John 1:12)... welcome to God’s family! In the coming weeks, we’ll help you to build on the foundation of faith in Jesus.

TAKING IT HOME

To get the most out of the Abundant Living experience, set aside 10-20 or so minutes every day for worship, prayer, the reading of the Word and the take home assignments:

Reflect: What resonated with you from this week’s lesson?

Word: Look up the Bible verses from this lesson and re-read them; Memorize the Reflection Verse (John 3:16)

Worship: Listen to “Thank You God for Saving Me” and “Lord I Need You” by Chris Tomlin

ABUNDANT LIVING: SESSION 2

WHO IS GOD?

OPENING DISCUSSION

What do you think it means that God is "personal?"

What traits do you think of when you hear the term "God's personality"?

Since the Garden of Eden, the serpent has been trying to distort what people believe about God. In Genesis 3:1-5, we read that Satan questions what God has said ("Did God actually say..."v1), and contradicts God's truthfulness and goodness ("You will not surely die..."v4). In so doing, Satan sowed a seed of doubt into Eve's mind about who God is and what his motives are. It caused Eve to question whether or not God was withholding something good from them and she chose to believe Satan rather than to believe God. What we believe about God shapes our thinking, motives, and behavior.

Video clip to watch: "The Danger of Seeking God" <http://youtu.be/bAOfyShC1tk>

What is your response to Dr. Hirsch's message?

WHAT IS GOD NOT LIKE?

Because many of us experience brokenness or abuse in our lives, our understanding of what God is like may be skewed by those wounding experiences.

From the list below, which of the False Images of God have you believed? Discuss why and then read the counteracting Truth Verse out loud:

False Image of God	Explanation of the lie	Truth Verse
Stern and demanding	God is waiting for you to make a mistake	Luke 15:17-24
Perfectionist	God is counting your rights and wrongs; he wants perfection	Romans 5:8
Takes the fun away	Doesn't like fun or doesn't want us to enjoy life	John 10:10
Absent	No real power; not involved in your life	Psalm 145:18
Good luck charm	You go to Him only when in need or want	Galatians 6:7-8

What other misconceptions have you believed about God?

WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Let's look at what Scripture says is true about God. You may not have time to get through all the following, so plan on working through the remainder at home on your own!

God is Loving

Read 1 John 4:7-8

How do these verses describe God?

What does it mean that God "is" love?

God is Good

Read Psalm 31:19 and Psalm 34:8

How does the Psalmist describe God in these verses?

What does it mean to “taste and see” in Psalm 34:8?

In what ways is God good?

Read Titus 3:4-7

How does Jesus coming to earth to be our Savior demonstrate the goodness of God?

God is Knowable

Read Jeremiah 9:23-24

What is the difference between knowing about God, and knowing God? Why does God want us to truly know Him?²

What kinds of things in our lives keep us from truly knowing God?

What other characteristics of God do we see in this passage?

2. The word translated “know” in this passage is a very intimate one; it goes well beyond just knowing facts about God. Rather, this is a personal relationship with the God of the universe. The first and greatest barrier to having this kind of relationship with God is sin. Because of our sin, all of us are separated from God. But because of His great love for us, God has made a way for us to truly know and be in relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.

TAKING IT HOME

Word: One of the primary ways God has given us to know Him better is through His Word. Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ." As you read the Word, you come to know God and his character, and God gives you the gift of faith. A key to living in the freedom of our new identity in Christ is to renew our minds regularly through the Word. If you aren't in the habit of reading the Bible, begin with the Gospel of John. Commit to read the Scriptures every day this week and in a notebook or journal, write a few notes about what God is teaching you about Himself.

Reflect: You can fully trust God – he is trustworthy! Pay attention this week to the messages you hear about who God is. Evaluate each idea by the truth of Scripture and choose to embrace what the Word says about God instead of what the culture around us or the voices in our head tell us!

FURTHER STUDY ON THE NATURE OF GOD:

God is Approachable - Read Hebrews 4:14-16

Why is it important that Jesus is sympathetic to what we need and feel? What does that mean about God's approachability?

How does knowing that God is approachable change the way you pray?

God is Creative & the Creator - Read Genesis 1:1-5

How is the way God creates different than the way humans create?

What does God's creativity influence the way that we view Him and His activity in our lives?

God is Honest - Read Jeremiah 17:9

When is a time when your own heart lied to you?

If the human heart is deceitful, why is it such good news that God is honest?

Read John 14:6 - What does this say about Jesus and the truth?

ABUNDANT LIVING: SESSION 3

YOUR TRUE IDENTITY

The lesson's focus is explore what it means to be created in God's image. One of Satan's biggest traps is to make us think we're not who God says we are. Let's look at what the truth of God's Words says:

REFLECTION VERSE

Write out 2 Corinthians 5:17

Reflect and respond to 2 Corinthians 5:17

WHAT IS MY IDENTITY?

Take a hard look at yourself when answering these questions. Answer these honestly, based on how you really feel deep inside, not how you want to be seen.

Imagine God thinking about you. What do you assume God feels when you come to his mind?

Do you have a false identity?

Which of the following statements do you believe about yourself?

- Am I a sinner who struggles to be God's child?
- Am I a child of God who struggles with sin?

Which statement has the proper God Image and Self Identity? And why?

In the following section read the verses and identify who the Word of God says you are. Write out response in the area provided:

Who Are You?	
John 1:12, 1 John 3:1	
John 15:15	
1 Corinthians 12:27	
2 Corinthians 5:17	
Ephesians 1:5	
Romans 6:6	
Romans 8:1	

Many things influence what we believe about ourselves - our family of origin, past experiences, things others have said about us, past teachings, movies, books, etc. But since God created us and knows us better than anyone, we can trust that what he says about us is truth. Anything that does not agree with what God says is false identity.

Personal reflection, then discuss as a group:

- In what ways do I have a false Identity?
- Where in my life am I believing lies about my true Identity?

- How has the Devil used trauma or negative thoughts to influence you?
- Write and recite out loud: "I am loved by God" seven times

TAKING IT HOME

Resist: Anytime the devil lies to you this week, pray against the lie and embrace God's truth about who you are! Replace the lies with worship of God for who he is and what he does for you! Record in a journal the lies that you've heard throughout the week, and next to each, write the truth from God that counteracts the lie.

Recite: Read aloud "Who God Says I Am" daily for the next week (next page).

Word: Memorize the Reflection Verse (Ephesians 2:10).

Worship: Listen and reflect to Jason Gray's song, "Remind Me Who I Am".

WHO GOD SAYS I AM

I am a child of God: See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. (1 John 3:1)

I am loved by God: In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:10)

I am forgiven: You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. (Col 2:13-14)

I am a new creation in Christ: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. (2 Cor 5:17)

I am free from condemnation: There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Rom 8:1)

I am set free: For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)

My true life is Christ in me: I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. (Gal 2:20)

I am no longer a slave to sin: We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. (Rom 6:6)

I am a citizen of Jesus' kingdom: He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Col 1:13-14)

I am accepted by Jesus: Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. (Rom 15:7)

My body is a temple of the Holy Spirit: Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? (1 Cor 6:19)

God provided everything I need to be godly: His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. (2 Peter 1:3)

ABUNDANT LIVING: SESSION 4

FORGIVEN AND FREE!

In the last session we discussed our identity as a child of God; basically, a comparison between how God sees us versus how we see ourselves. This week we will explore the forgiving nature of God and through his grace and love, his desire to forgive and forget our sin.

OPENING DISCUSSION

- Do you believe that God is patient and forgiving? Why or why not?

EXPLORING THE TOPIC

How we think about God shapes our beliefs, and our beliefs shape our behavior. Knowing the truth about God's character and how he relates to us as his children is an essential part of learning to live in the freedom that he gives us. Let's start our study today by looking at a couple of scriptures that speak of God's character in relation to forgiveness:

But the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him. (Daniel 9:9, NLT)

Yet the Lord longs to be gracious to you; therefore he will rise up to show you compassion. (Isaiah 30:18a, NIV)

Based on these two verses, how would you describe the nature of God?

The Bible also tells us that God desires to forgive all people (2 Peter 3:9). God's love is best explained through the gospel message; that he sent Jesus to the Earth, died on the cross and was resurrected so that we all could experience the grace and forgiveness of God (John 3:16-18).

DIGGING INTO THE WORD

Read 1 John 1:8-2:2, then write out 1 John 1:9

Do you believe there are sins in your life that God would not forgive? Why or why not?

What does it mean that God will “cleanse from all unrighteousness”?

What is the basis for our forgiveness today?

Read Colossians 1:13-14

What does it mean to be redeemed?

What does your kingdom citizenship have to do with forgiveness?

Read Luke 23:39

What did the criminal need to do (works or actions) to gain access to Paradise?

Why did Jesus forgive one criminal and not the other? Discuss the condition of each criminal’s heart.

If Jesus was willing to forgive a convicted criminal, with a simple statement of belief and repentance, is he willing to do the same for you?

WRAP-UP:

- Discuss areas in your life where you need to receive forgiveness or testimony of God's forgiveness in your life.
- Then pray and thank Jesus for his forgiveness of you.

TAKING IT HOME

To get the most out of the Abundant Living experience, set aside 10-20 minutes every day for worship, prayer, the reading of the Word and the take-home assignments:

Create a Sins/Confession List

- Begin with prayer, asking God to "Search me... and know my heart" (Psalm 139:23).
- List sins on a blank piece of paper that you are aware of or that God brings to mind (your sins, not someone else's!).
- When finished, pray over the list, admitting each one as sin, and thanking God for forgiveness in Jesus.
- Write the words of 1 John 1:9 over the top of the list, symbolically applying the truth of Scripture to your life.
- Finally, destroy the list, just as God removes our sin from us and remembers them no more!

Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit... Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!
(Psalm 32:1-2, 11)

Word: Look up the word "forgiveness" (or "forgiven") in the concordance in the back of your Bible. Read a different verse from the concordance (on forgiveness) each day this week; Memorize Psalm 103:12.

Worship: Listen to Casting Crowns "East to West" from the Altar and the Door album - <http://youtu.be/FWMebzGZGZc>.

Next week's focus: Filled with the Holy Spirit, the power source for Abundant Living!

ABUNDANT LIVING: SESSION 5

POWER FROM THE HOLY SPIRIT

Jesus' earthly life and ministry were empowered by the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The same Holy Spirit lives in every believer today, and the power that enabled Jesus to heal the sick, cast out demons, and raise the dead is available to work in and through us as well!

OPENING DISCUSSION

How did working through the sins/cleansing list this past week make you feel?

EXPLORING THE TOPIC

Write out Ephesians 5:18

DIGGING INTO THE WORD

Read Galatians 5:16-26

What is the battle that Paul describes in these verses?

What are the evidences of walking in the flesh? (v19-21)

Which of these "fleshly" evidences are a struggle in your life?

Discuss the contrast between the list in verses 22-24 & the one in verses 19-21:

How could you put verses 25-26 into practice this week?

Read Ephesians 5:15-21

How would you connect the thought in v15 with what you just read in Galatians 5?

Verse 18 commands us to be filled with the Spirit; why did Paul set it in contrast with getting drunk? (see endnote for more on this)

What do verses 19-21 describe as the results of being filled with the Spirit?

What does Acts 1:8 describe as the result of being filled with the Spirit?

KEY POINT: Though the Spirit lives in all believers, He doesn't fill all believers! It is God's will for you to be filled with the Holy Spirit, and it's a choice that you make!

HOW TO BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Examine yourself and confess your sin
He who covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy. Proverbs 28:13
2. Surrender yourself completely to God
I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Romans 12:1
3. Ask to be filled
If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him! Luke 11:13

Since we're commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph 5:18), and God promises to hear and answer any prayer according to his will (1 John 5:14-15), we can confidently ask God to do what he already wants to do in our lives!

Wrap-up: Take 5 min. of silent examination and prayer before the Lord, practicing the three steps above.

Group prayer time: Focus on praising God and giving thanks for the Spirit's filling and his desire to work in each of our lives!

TAKING IT HOME

Surrender daily to the filling of the Holy Spirit, and then follow his prompting throughout each day!

Word: Continue reading through the gospel of John (a chapter a day is recommended!) and take notes in your journal about what you catches your attention. Read and practice the "Spiritual Breathing" below.

Read John 14:15-31 - What do you learn about the Holy Spirit and his role in your life?

SPIRITUAL BREATHING (BILL BRIGHT)³

If you become aware of an area of your life (an attitude or an action) that is displeasing to the Lord, even though you are walking with Him and sincerely desiring to serve Him, simply thank God that He has forgiven your sins—past, present, and future—on the basis of Christ's death on the cross. Claim His love and forgiveness by faith and continue to have fellowship with Him.

If you retake the throne of your life through sin—a definite act of disobedience—breathe spiritually. Spiritual Breathing (exhaling the impure and inhaling the pure) is an exercise in faith that enables you to experience God's love and forgiveness.

1. **Exhale:** Confess your sin—agree with God concerning your sin and thank Him for His forgiveness of it, according to 1 John 1:9 and Hebrews 10:1–25. Confession involves repentance—a change in attitude and action.
2. **Inhale:** Surrender the control of your life to Christ and receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit by faith. Trust that He now directs and empowers you, according to the command of Ephesians 5:18 and the promise of 1 John 5:14,15.

3. William Bright, *Have You Made the Wonderful Discovery of the Spirit-filled Life?* <http://crustore.org/downloads/SFL.pdf>, accessed April 12, 2018.

ABUNDANT LIVING: SESSION 6

FORGIVEN, NOW FORGIVE!

Over the past few weeks we have explored the process of salvation, our identity in Christ, the forgiving heart of God, and being filled with the Holy Spirit. This week we will encounter the freedom and blessing of forgiving others.

OPENING DISCUSSION

- Have each person share what has touched them or stood out the most from the prior sessions of this series (keep short, 1-2 minutes each).
- Brief group discussion: Open forum (5 minutes) to discuss how forgiving someone or being forgiven by someone, has affected his or her lives.

EXPLORING THE TOPIC

In the prior sessions we learned that God is merciful and forgiving, and that through the death and resurrection of Jesus he made a way to forgive us for all of our sins. Sometimes forgiving others is easy, but often it can be very difficult, especially to forgive those who have hurt us deeply. God asks us to forgive others, even the hard ones; and doing so will set us free. Holding on to pain and disappointments can lead to bitterness, which causes us harm instead of the one we are not forgiving. Jesus commands us to forgive, to lay our burdens upon Him, to be set free from anger, bitterness, and frustration. The result will be peace and joy in our lives.

Mark 11:25 - *And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

Matthew 5:43 - *You have heard that it was said; You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.*

Matthew 11:28 - *Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

DIGGING INTO THE WORD

Read Ephesians 4:26-27

What's the difference between sinning while being angry and being angry without sinning?

Why does God tell us to not let the sun go down on our anger?

What kind of foothold would this behavior give to the devil?

ILLUSTRATION: Imagine that your life is like a large ranch with fences all around. On the back of your property is a large gate. When you choose to hold on to anger and not forgive, it's like opening the gate and allowing Satan to enter your ranch, set up a military camp and launch an assault on your property! When you choose to forgive, it kicks him off your property and locks the gate shut.

Read Ephesians 4:31-32

What does it mean to forgive someone?

DEF: Releasing someone from the judgment and consequence of their actions or sin; forgiveness is based on the grace of God's forgiveness of us

Chip Ingram describes three phases of forgiveness:⁴

Phase 1: Forgive (a choice) Don't need to feel like it... it's an act of the will!

Phase 2: Forgiving (repeatedly as resentment, pain or anger re-surfaces) Rom 12:14
– bless those who persecute you; bless & do not curse them

Phase 3: Forgiven (occurs when you get to the point where it's completely released and you're free of the pain, guilt, anger, bitterness, etc.)

4. Chip Ingram, *True Spirituality: Becoming a Romans 12 Christian* (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2009), 240-243.

WRAP-UP:

There is nothing wrong with feeling angry or hurt when someone wrongs you; how you deal with the anger and negative emotions is what's really important. Mark 7:20 tells us that it is what comes out of a man, that defiles a man. In the last session we learned how to become and stay filled with the Holy Spirit. When someone hurts you, stop, don't react, pray and ask the Holy Spirit to come and fill you, and to give you the words to say or the strength to not sin against your brother.

- Break into small groups of three or four, men with men and women with women. Who are you holding unforgiveness against? A parent? A former spouse? Yourself?
- Pray as a group for God to reveal any persons in your lives He wants you to forgive. Write down the names of the people God has given to you.

TAKING IT HOME

Create a Forgiveness List

- Begin with prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal truth, showing you those whom you need to forgive.
- On a blank piece of paper, list the names of the people God has given to you.
- When finished, confess to God the specific things that each person did to you. Ask God for the power of the Holy Spirit to forgive these people for the sins they committed against you.
- Speak forgiveness out loud for each person: "I choose to forgive _____ for _____ and no longer hold the consequences of their offense against them."
- Then ask God to forgive you for being angry with them and to release you from the bondage of your anger. Take the time to thank God for Jesus and his forgiveness and ask him to bless each person in a specific way.
- Pray for God to bless each person on your list every day throughout the week.

Word: Read Proverbs 19:11, Proverbs 24:17-18, Proverbs 24:29, Proverbs 25:21-22, Matthew 5:7-9, Romans 12:17-18

Worship: Listen to Hill Song United "Mercy-Mercy" from the Zion album - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVGNdWXdVIU>

Video clip to watch: Jarrett Stephens – Forgiveness – I am Second
<http://www.iamsecond.com/struggles/forgiveness/>

For further reading and study on forgiveness, see Craig Caster's Forgiveness and Reconciliation Workbook at <http://www.fdm.world/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Forgiveness-Reconciliation-English.pdf>

APPENDIX J

BELIEVE CHECKUP ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

This self-assessment is designed to help you evaluate your current strengths and growth areas in 30 core biblical Beliefs, Practices, and Virtues. Your honest responses will provide you the most accurate feedback, and best personalized insights to help you pursue your spiritual growth.

1. What is your age?
 - ☐ Under 18 - Do Not Proceed
 - ☐ 18-24
 - ☐ 25-29
 - ☐ 30-39
 - ☐ 40-49
 - ☐ 50-59
 - ☐ 60-69
 - ☐ 70 and older
2. Please indicate your gender.
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Male
3. What is your marital status?
 - ☐ Now Married
 - ☐ Widowed
 - ☐ Divorced
 - ☐ Separated
 - ☐ Never Married
4. I thank God daily for who he is and what he is doing in my life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		
5. I am living out God's purpose for my life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		
6. I believe everything I am or own comes from God and belongs to God.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

7. I believe the Bible is absolutely true in matters of faith and morals.
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all true of me | | | | Somewhat true of me | | | | Very true of me | |
8. I control my tongue.
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all true of me | | | | Somewhat true of me | | | | Very true of me | |
9. I feel fully equipped to share my faith with people who do not attend church.
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all true of me | | | | Somewhat true of me | | | | Very true of me | |
10. I see every aspect of my life and work as service to God.
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all true of me | | | | Somewhat true of me | | | | Very true of me | |
11. I know and use my spiritual gifts to fulfill God's purposes.
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all true of me | | | | Somewhat true of me | | | | Very true of me | |
12. I give God credit for all that I am and all that I possess.
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all true of me | | | | Somewhat true of me | | | | Very true of me | |
13. I know my spiritual gifts.
- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all true of me | | | | Somewhat true of me | | | | Very true of me | |

14. I am willing to risk everything that is important in my life for Jesus Christ.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

15. I believe nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

16. I believe a Christian should live a sacrificial life that is not driven by the pursuit of material things.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

17. I seek to grow closer to God by listening to him in prayer.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

18. I believe the Bible has decisive authority over what I say and do.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

19. I do not burst out in anger toward others.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

20. I believe God is actively involved in my life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

21. I frequently share my faith with people who are not Christians.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

22. I desire Jesus to be first in my life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

23. I believe God enables me to do things I could not or would not otherwise do.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

24. I believe I will inherit eternal life because of what Jesus has done for me.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

25. I am not anxious about my life as I have an inner peace from God.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

26. Prayer is a central part of my daily life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

27. I keep my composure, even when people or circumstances irritate me.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

28. I am known to maintain honesty and integrity when under pressure.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

29. I know God has forgiven me because of what Jesus has done.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

30. I regularly volunteer at my church.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

31. I frequently give up what I want for the sake of others.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

32. God's grace enables me to forgive people who have hurt me.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

33. I give to others expecting nothing in return.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

34. I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

35. I am known as a person who speaks words of kindness to those in need of encouragement.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

36. I have inner contentment, even when things go wrong.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

37. I believe God loves me and therefore my life has value.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

38. I give away my time to serve and help others in my community.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

39. No task is too menial, if God calls me to it.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

40. I believe people who deliberately reject Jesus Christ as Savior will not be granted eternal life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

41. I believe all people are loved by God; therefore, I too should love them.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

42. I believe the purpose of the church is to share the gospel and nurture Christians to maturity in Christ.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

43. When I am in a crisis, I find hope in my faith of God.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

44. I exist to know, love and serve God.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

45. I am confident that God is working everything out for my good, regardless of the circumstances today.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

46. I believe Jesus is God in the flesh - who died and rose bodily from the dead.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

47. Circumstances do not dictate my mood.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

48. I participate in a group of Christians who really know me and support me.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me			Very true of me		

49. My first priority in spending money is to support God's work.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

50. I give away 10 percent or more of my income to God's work.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

51. I believe all people who place their trust in Jesus Christ will spend eternity in heaven.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

52. I take unpopular stands when my faith dictates.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

53. I am willing to make any of my faults known to Christians who care for me.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

54. God calls me to be involved in the lives of the poor and suffering.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

55. I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my life.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

56. I allow people to make mistakes.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

57. I believe we are created in the image of God and therefore have equal value, regardless of race, religion, or gender.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

58. I am known for not raising my voice.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

59. I believe I should stand up for those who cannot stand up for themselves.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

60. I believe I cannot grow as a Christian unless I am an active member of a local church.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

61. I allow other Christians to hold me accountable for my actions.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

62. I follow God even when it involves suffering.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Not at all true of me				Somewhat true of me				Very true of me	

63. I read the Bible daily.

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Not at all | | | | Somewhat | | | Very true | | |
| true of me | | | | true of me | | | of me | | |

64. Which of the following best describes where you are in your spiritual life?

- ☐ I am just starting to explore how to grow spiritually
- ☐ I consider myself a Christian, though my faith is not a significant part of my life
- ☐ I believe in God, but I've not made a decision to commit to having a relationship with Jesus
- ☐ I've definitely made a decision to commit to having a relationship with Jesus
- ☐ I have a solid relationship with Christ that makes a difference in my life
- ☐ I have an intimate relationship with Christ that influences my daily life
- ☐ Christ is the most important relationship in my life

65. How would you describe your current pace of spiritual growth?

- ☐ I am in a season of rapid spiritual growth.
- ☐ I am growing at a moderate but not rapid rate.
- ☐ I am growing at a slow but steady rate.
- ☐ I am content with staying right where I'm at spiritually.
- ☐ I have stalled spiritually.

66. How long have you been attending your current church?

- ☐ I have visited one or two times
- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 3-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

APPENDIX K

SCRIPTURE ENGAGEMENT ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

Please think about how you use the Bible. For this survey, please consider Bible use to include reading, listening to, watching, praying with, or using Bible text or content in any format.

For these first couple of questions, consider realistically how often you use the Bible.

1. Overall, how often do you use the Bible?
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ Less than once a year
 - ☐ Once or twice a year
 - ☐ Three or four times a year
 - ☐ Once a month
 - ☐ Once a week
 - ☐ Several times a week
 - ☐ Four or more times a week
 - ☐ Every day
2. How often do you use the Bible on your own, not including times when you are at a large church service or Mass?
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ Less than once a year
 - ☐ Once or twice a year
 - ☐ Three or four times a year
 - ☐ Once a month
 - ☐ Once a week
 - ☐ Several times a week
 - ☐ Four or more times a week
 - ☐ Every day

Please indicate how often you have the following experiences when using the Bible.

3. When I use the Bible, I experience a sense of connection to God.
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Occasionally
 - ☐ Most of the time
 - ☐ Always
4. When I use the Bible, I experience a curiosity to know God better.
 - ☐ Never
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Occasionally
 - ☐ Most of the time
 - ☐ Always

5. When I use the Bible, I experience an awareness of how much I need God.
- ☐ Never
 - ☐ Rarely
 - ☐ Occasionally
 - ☐ Most of the time
 - ☐ Always

Think about your Bible use within the PAST MONTH. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

6. As a result of using the Bible, I feel more willing to engage in my faith.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree
7. As a result of using the Bible, I am more generous with my time, energy or financial resources.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree
8. As a result of using the Bible, I show more loving behavior towards others.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree

Indicate whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.

9. I believe the Bible is a way of knowing what God expects from me.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree
10. I believe that the Bible is a rulebook or guide on how to live my best life.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree

11. I believe that the Bible is a letter from God expressing his love and salvation for me.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree
12. The Bible has a lot of influence on my decision on who to vote for.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree
13. The Bible has a lot of influence on the movies and television I choose to watch.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree
14. The Bible has a lot of influence on what I buy.
- ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Very strongly agree

APPENDIX L

REDEMPTIVE DISCIPLE-MAKING ASSESSMENT

The following questions were asked through a confidential Google Form:

Thank you for taking time to complete this assessment... Your input will greatly assist in the development of future discipleship material and programs at Venture!

Which Discipleship Group did you participate in?

- ☐ Discipleship Essentials (Greg Ogden)
- ☐ Jesus as Mentor (Bonnie Brooks Bjarin)
- ☐ Radical Mentoring (Reggie Campbell)
- ☐ Followers Made (Brian Phipps)

Answer the following questions in view of your participation in a discipleship group recently:

1. I believe that I am called to be a disciple and also to be a disciple-maker.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

2. I have a greater conviction of my role in reaching lost people through relationships, serving and witness.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

3. I feel confident and equipped to personally disciple a group of people.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

4. I am using my spiritual gifts and abilities to serve God more than I did before.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

5. I plan to begin discipling a group of people within the next six months.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

6. I am more engaged relationally with unsaved neighbors, co-workers, or family members to help them to come to know Jesus.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

7. I have greater desire and consistency in my personal spiritual disciplines such as Bible reading and prayer.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

8. I feel closer in my personal relationship with God than before.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

9. I am engaging in new or different spiritual practices that are helping me grow in my spiritual journey.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

10. I plan to use this same discipleship curriculum with others in the future.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

11. I highly recommend for other people to go through this same discipleship material.

<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Not at all true of me		Somewhat true of me		Very true of me

12. What did you like best about this discipleship curriculum?
[open ended answer]

13. What would you recommend changing in order to make this discipleship curriculum more effective?
[open ended answer]

14. Other comments or recommendations?
[open ended answer]

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